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ABSTRACT

Presentations by nationally and internationally known speakers are in proceedings from the three-day conference. Rural futures; people, land, and water; and education and economics are major topics reported from the conference, which was designed to increase issue awareness among rural residents, increase dialogue among rural residents and between them and legislators, and awaken rural residents to their ability to solve their problems through planning and affecting legislation. The edited speeches deal with such issues as rural to urban migration, small farm versus large farm, feeding the world, pollution control, lifelong education, moral values, governmental policies affecting rural areas, the rural family, and future impact of telecommunications on rural and urban America. Also included are remarks from speakers at special sessions on rural housing, energy, rural health, taxation, and myths about rural America. The preface summarizes legislative recommendations from discussion groups on land use, education as a vehicle for change, nurturing traditional values through education and mass media, "rural hot-lines" to legislators, checks and balances on bureaucracy, and free markets and adequate capital expansion. (RS)

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Conference On Rural America Proceedings

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AMERICAN REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL 1776-1976

CONFERENCE ON RURAL AMERICA
July 15, 16, 17, 1976
Crookston, Minnesota

PROCEEDINGS

Co-Chairmen - Audrey Eickhoff
Jacqueline Bergan

Proceedings Condensed and Edited by
ROZ WHALEN

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Speakers for the Conference on Rural America were intentionally chosen from varied areas of expertise. The unifying criteria used in their selection were their potential ability to increase issue-awareness among rural residents and to give perspectives on probable rural futures; therefore, a repetition of theme and a divergence of viewpoint were not only to be expected, but were considered by the planners to be desirable.

Photographs provided by LeMar Photography, Crookston, Minnesota.

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Preface

The ideas for the Conference on Rural America evolved from the rural people in Northwestern Minnesota. Interest sprang from an increased awareness of the new global importance of their rural agriculture and an increased concern about the challenges and choices facing rural Americans--especially the choice to effectively plan for the future by setting priorities, defining issues, and developing leadership in order to creatively direct the political, social, economic, educational and physical resource development.

The rural citizen has an important role in seeking to create ways to participate in planning for the future of rural America. The integration of the citizen and professional is essential in the decision-making process.

Conference goals developed as the result of the need
--to create awareness among rural residents of major issues which confront them.
--to increase dialogue among rural residents and between them and their legislators.
--to awaken rural residents to their potential ability to solve their own problems, do their own planning and effect legislation.
The conference was carefully planned in order to achieve those goals. Community involvement was of major importance; the conference planning committee drew from local resource people, community organizations and institutions in setting goals and the methods of effecting those goals.

Structurally, the year-long program was set up as follows: 1) a series of eight mini-conferences designed primarily to stimulate interest, give background information, and increase dialogue among rural residents, 2) a three-day major conference in July during which participants had the opportunity to listen and learn from nationally and internationally known "experts" and also, to interact with one another in discussion groups, "experts" and legislators, to develop a tool by which they could influence legislation.

This new rural self-determination is evidenced in legislative recommendations which evolved from action-oriented discussion groups. Concerns in priority areas were communicated by area citizens to legislators at a special open forum meeting. The following is a brief summary of those legislative recommendations:

--In the area of land use, local input is needed so that those who are most affected can participate in the decision-making process.
--Education was the preferred major vehicle for change in the future. The delivery system that holds the greatest promise is continuing adult education, with a special emphasis on learning as a life-long process.
--Our special "rural" heritage of the precious traditional values of honesty, responsibility, humility, love and "respect for mystery" should be nurtured and developed through our educational and public media systems.
--Politically, rural America has lacked both clout on the national scene and effective means of communication with those who govern. Direct access to legislators through "rural hot-lines" and training in the skills of practical politics would help to solve these problems.
--Bureaucracy by political administrative authority needs a system of "checks and balances" like those provided constitutionally to other branches of government. These "checks and balances" may involve educating professional bureaucrats in basic human relations that encompass the traditional values of justice and the unique worth of every individual.
--Exonomically, rural areas must remain competitive in the market place. Free markets for goods produced and adequate capital for expansion are two goals which were frequently voiced during the conference. The vulnerability of agriculture in the world market, the cost/price squeeze, was a concern expressed through the mini-conferences and the major conference in July.

The basic theme developed during the conference was that all crises, choices and challenges involve human needs, desires, and emotions; therefore, we must strive to become more aware of ourselves, our priorities, and of our neighbors, both locally and globally. We must become in tune with our earth, its land and resources. Participants felt that this increased awareness and individual growth will express itself in an increased sense of responsibility and will renew rural people's confidence in their ability to solve their own problems and plan their own future.

We are thankful to those who so willingly contributed their time and effort to the success of the conference. Community support was essential to that success. We especially wish to thank Provost Stanley Sahlstrom and his staff of the University of Minnesota Crookston. Dr. Sahlstrom's guidance, the fine staff assistance and campus facilities were major factors in the production of this conference. We also extend

our gratitude to the following people for their expert guidance and assistance:
Gene Abbott, Director, Northwest Regional Development Commission, Crookston
Bill Brummer, Director, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Crookston
Jon Wefald, Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture
Bob Bergland, former 7th District Congressman, presently U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
Senator Roger Moe, Minnesota State Legislator
Representative Bill Kelly, Minnesota State Legislator

Jackie Bergan
Audrey Eickhof
Co-Chairmen
Conference Planning Committee

Audrey Eickhof

Jacqueline Bergan

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Day 1

Rural Futures

Government Speaks to Rural America

William H. Walker III
Assistant Secretary
of Agriculture for
Rural Development
USDA
Washington, D.C.*

This month we're observing our nation's bicentennial anniversary; it is appropriate that each of us takes the opportunity to think about what this great country is all about. Two centuries ago when men and boys took up arms, fought and died for their ideas and beliefs in the battles of Lexington and Concord, ours was a nation of farmers. Those courageous farmers, those men of principle, were bold enough to risk their lives and fortunes by signing the Declaration of Independence, the document too many of us take for granted today. They did this because they believed in freedom and wanted this new land to be a free, independent nation--a nation built and kept strong by such values as individual responsibility and initiative. Through the years those who have worked the land and those who have lived close to it have set an outstanding example of leadership for the rest of our nation.

Today, agriculture and rural America have emerged as the real basis for America's strength as a nation. The renewed growth and vigor in rural America is one of the important population news stories in our country today. During the first four years of this decade, rural population increased by 1.6 million people, compared to an average net loss of 1 million per year over the previous four decades. All across our land, people who were once forced to leave the land and rural communities in search of jobs and a better life are finding new opportunities in the country.

The face of rural America is changing. I can well remember the days when rural people were isolated--often out of touch--and even considered a bit backward by their city cousins. But because of improved transportation, communications and other modern-day conveniences, the era of a backward rural America is now a thing of the past.

With the resurgence of vigor in rural America and the national turn-around that is taking place, individuals and communities are finding that there are new complex problems to cope with. A farmer in Illinois is being crowded out by homes, highways and shopping centers. His taxes are rising; his income is falling. Nagging neighbors find the farm's odors offensive. "It's getting worse and worse," he says. "I just wish all the people would go away." The people won't go away, of course. All indications are that they will keep coming in even greater numbers, bringing with them the trappings of urban life, paving cornfields to make parking lots and developing subdivisions where cattle once grazed. Many farmers have found that getting away from the metropolitan area does not mean a sure escape from development pressures.

What should be the role of government in coping with these problems of shrinking agricultural lands, of rampant and random development? What should be our role as citizens? Basically, what should be the role of government relative to the 58% of America's land that is in private hands--or more specifically, the 75% of private lands held by farmers and ranchers? The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a major involvement in both of these concerns. It has responsibility for assuring that the nation will have sufficient timber, fiber and food

**This is an edited, condensed version of Mr. Walker's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN*

production capacity to meet present and future needs. It also has the responsibility for helping local people make their community a better place in which to live, work and play.

The major responsibility for planning the future of rural America, however, does not rest with the Department of Agriculture or any other federal department or agency; nor should it. That responsibility should rest with local and state governments where they choose to exercise it. In rural development, Congress and the Executive Branch of government can certainly provide a spark of leadership, inspiration and some assistance; however, the real responsibility for meeting the challenges must rest on the shoulders of rural people themselves. Local leaders with their abundant initiative, know-how, resourcefulness and energy are greater assets than a shopping basket full of federal rural development programs. The real strength of our nation must rest with the people themselves.

In this regard, we can take a lesson from some of the vast urban areas of our country. For years, many people believed that the problems of the big cities could be solved with more and bigger injections of federal money. After billions of dollars had been poured into cities in imaginative and well-meaning programs, the harsh fact emerged that federal spending had often become the problem, not the solution. In too many instances, people became addicted to federal handouts--a deadly enemy of self-reliance and independence which we all value.

We must introduce a new balance in the relationship between the individual and the government which favors greater individual freedom and self-reliance, one that favors greater responsibility and freedom for leaders of state and local governments.

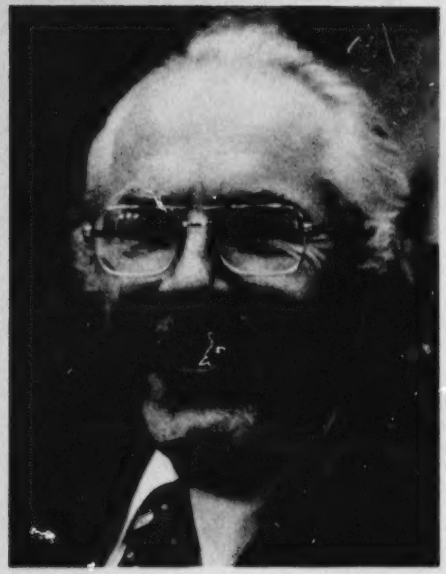
To be an American is indeed a privilege. To live free, however, is a responsibility.

"Rural America has had a 'sleepy time' existence for most of its life. With the impending 'awakening' of the rural segments of our country, adequate forethought and planning by rural Americans is needed in order that the new influences can be controlled and channeled the way rural Americans desire."

Neil Mattson, Editor, Warren Sheaf, Warren, Minnesota

"Our ability to absorb narrow technologies is excellent, while our ability to understand social and other consequences of our actions is very poor."

Gene Abbott, Executive Director, N.W. Regional Development Commission.



Minnesota Responds to Government

Dr. William H. Hueg Jr.
Deputy Vice President and Dean
Institute of Agriculture, Forestry
and Home Economics
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN*

This three days is an opportunity for rural America to reassess its situation in the bicentennial year. Mr. Walker made a plea for each of us to look at what we can do as individuals. It's so easy for us to say, "Let government do it." We get the kind of government we deserve and, having had the opportunity the past fifteen years to work closely with our state legislature, I'm coming at this point to their defense. I may be critical of them before I'm done. Why should we expect legislators to be different from the rest of us? Under our system of government, we select them from us, so they are a cross-section of us. In that light, it is important that as citizens and residents of rural, suburban or urban America we express ourselves and let them know what we believe and what we want them to do.

I'd like to take off on a few points I think you've got to keep in mind as you visit among yourselves here in the next couple of days.

--I think the whole issue of financing rural America is number one. Frequently, as I talk to farm groups, as I talk to citizens around this state, there seems to be this underlying fear that somebody else is going to come in and buy us up. It'll only happen if we are willing to sell a birthright. If rural America is to move the way I think we want it to, we do have to have other sources of funding than what we have traditionally used. And we may have to go to other countries and to our large cities to bring that capital in that makes it possible for some desirable things to happen. It's at that point that local people have to buy in to be a part of it. It has a great deal to do with farm structure--the whole series of discussions over the last couple of sessions of the legislature were about corporate farms. At times I feel it's tilting the windmill. We should encourage corporate farms in Minnesota, but they should be family corporations that make it possible to move a farm from one generation to another so that each generation can plan to buy the farm at advantage. As I look down the road, we're going to have to come up with the mechanisms that make it possible for us to keep it in that kind of system, make sure it doesn't get taxed out of existence and make it possible to conveniently and equitably move business, farms and other assets from one generation to the next.

--Another point that I think you should consider is that we are a very interdependent society. Yet, in my travels, there are so many people who want to make the "we-they" syndrome work. The syndrome, of course, is this one that "we" in the metropolitan area pit ourselves against "they" who are in rural America. This is ridiculous! Let me just give you an example: in 1973, when agricultural prices were generally good, at least people were making a little over the cost of producing the crop, in the state of Minnesota alone, 35% of the new cars that were sold were sold to farmers. And if you don't think that has an impact on employment--if you don't think that has an impact on that Ford plant that sits on the banks of the Mississippi River in the city of St. Paul--you're not "with it." So we're not a "we-they" society. We're highly dependent on one another.

This is an edited, condensed version of Dr. Hueg's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.

--It bothers me at times when the Secretary of Agriculture speaks about the 4% of our population that's agriculture. There's nothing further from the truth. It's 4% that are on the land, but agriculture employs about 28% of the total work force in our country. Sure, on an average across the country, 4% are on the farm producing that basic food and fiber, but they couldn't begin to do it if there weren't somebody making the tractor, somebody getting the feed, the fertilizer, all of the inputs. Then, on the other side, there's no sense in having the production if you can't market and process it. And so, we are a highly dependent society.

--We have tremendous issues concerning environment. Those who live in urban areas can get very concerned about the environment because they're crowded. In the urban areas, we've not done what we should have. The opportunity still exists in rural America to make sure we get these (environmental issues) in the appropriate balance. We have a tremendous education job to do with the general citizenry of this state and this country. The day that Adam and Eve came on to the face of the earth, we started to affect the environment. And so concern over the environment isn't something that was developed ten or twenty years ago by the "instant ecologist." Maybe we haven't done the best job, but we do still have those kinds of opportunities to improve the environment while we are using it.

I think those are the kinds of questions you should be asking your legislators. If I have any point at all, it is that government is very fast to talk about what they'll do and they're a little slower in the response. But it goes back to each of us in what we really want that government to do for us and in recognizing that we ought to do much of it for ourselves, as, in fact, we are that government.

"One of the directions our [educational] institutions, our community schools, are extending themselves more is as a community education center. . .Education is not only to follow the leadership and tradition that society in a culture has produced, but to equip a person to deal with alternatives, to make value decisions."

Lance Holthusen, Futurist, Minnesota Science Museum, Mini-Conference Speaker.

Farming in the Year 2000

Hiram Drache, Author,
Professor of History
Concordia College
Moorhead, MN 56560*

I suspect that this will be the most unpopular talk of this conference. In some respects I hope it is.

The good old days! The good old days when 70% of the capital in agriculture was generated on the farms by the blood, sweat, tears and toil of the family. Up until 1950, 70% of all capital generated in agriculture was generated right on the farm by the sweat of the children and the wives. No wonder eight out of eleven kids in the Prostfield family left the farm as soon as they could. You bankers better wake up to that. If you're going to keep them on the farm, you'd better finance. That's exactly what has to be done. Farmers, don't feel sorry for yourselves because you've got the biggest club that anybody in America has got. First of all, you own the choice collateral--land. Secondly, three times a day they have to come to you because their guts are empty and they want to eat. Third, we are the dollar-savers because we are the only industry that is unrestricted by over-legislation or by intensive unions, so that we have the free enterprise to do what we will. Even though agriculture has been one of the most poorly managed industries, the free enterprise system of the good, innovative farmers has made America the great industrial power that we are because 75% of the cash exports of this country for over a century came right off the land. Where would the American dollar be if it hadn't been for the sale of about $22 billion worth of agricultural products? Yet there are a lot of you people who want to saddle that innovative, creative, progressive, challenging agriculture that we've had because so many want to keep the good old days.

I want you to remember I am a family-oriented farmer and I do not believe that there is a single thing in this country outside of legislation that can destroy the pull that the family-oriented farm has on rural America. These are not exploiters of the land I'm talking about. I'm talking about good, conservation-oriented farmers who have the money and the know-how to save the soil for posterity.

Where are we today and where are we headed? Iowa and Minnesota have the greatest farm population of the fifty states. North Dakota and South Dakota have the highest percentage of farm population of the 50 states. And yet it is clear that the farm of the Jeffersonian-Agrarian myth is nowhere to be found except in the minds of individuals. The farm of the Jeffersonian-Agrarian myth is that little 160-acre farmer with tenth-grade education and everybody could starve to death equally--including the consumers. In 1973 the U.S. Department of Agriculture made a study, and the U.S.D.A. is always super conservative, in which they pointed out what the optimum one-man family farm was. The optimum row crop farm was 800 acres. That's what one man with a good set of machinery could do with corn or soybeans. And what did they point out? The average size row crop farm in America was 263 acres. Then they pointed out that the optimum size one-man wheat farm was 1,950 acres, but the figures showed that the average size wheat farms were 694 acres. What am I

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saying in both cases? The average size farm today is one-third the size of what the U.S.D.A. says the average, well-mechanized one-man can do. Where are we going with the farms? Well, the figures ought to tell you where we're going to go because the bankers around here are not going to finance the guy who can't make a living farming unless his wife wants to work full time in town to support that lovely little 4-H Club project. We've got a lot of those. We're going to have more of them.

What else do we know? In 1910 the average size farm in America was 138 acres. Today it's 391 acres. We have more than tripled the size of farms in the last 60 years and we aren't done yet. With this industry that has an asset to debt ratio of 5½ to 1, do you think we're going to stop when the farmers today have about 17 cents in debt to every 100 pennies they own? They are not about to stop. That may be disproportionately distributed. It may be that the guy who is operating a little bit more efficiently has got a better leverage, or he may be further in debt and know how to leverage better. It tells you that barring some kind of major change in the free enterprise system, we will continue to have larger family-oriented farms in America. I'm not talking about mythical corporate giants. On the opposite side there is not likely to be much of a decline in total farm numbers.

What am I saying? All of you know that there is a very strong effort on the part of people today who want to move to the country and have 40 acres, two sheep and a pony. As long as they have a full-time industrial job and carry that union card in their dinner pail to work every morning, they continue to support that little project, because maybe they don't like a cabin at the lake. Maybe they like having chickens. And I'm predicting that there will be a long, long time before we will get rid of about two million of these little hobby farms. Let's not include them with the man who provides the meal that we ate today. He is in a totally different position. Too many people try to tie them together. I find out that these are the strongest competitors for land in the rural areas today any place near an industrial town. Now a quick survey of figures tell you this, because you know that the top two brackets in the census figures are growing, the one-and two-size farms, $100,000 gross and $40,000 gross. What has happened to the three-, four- and five-class farms? They've either moved up or they've taken a job in town--like my two brothers-in-law have and they have never lived better--because they never could make a go of it farming. So I own their land. Or do you want to move yourself into that other spot, the class-six farm which, as you with the figures know, is almost swelling with "one-point-something" million farmers who earn less than $2,500 gross income a year. If they want to have a hobby, they are entitled to it because they have to pay the costs. These are not farmers; now, let's stop kidding ourselves and let's stop ranting and appealing to these particular people with all kinds of legislation.

Now the size of farm has always been an antagonistic problem in American history. It is my conclusion that from 1910 to the present time, with the exception of some major technological breakthrough, there has been no other external force that has hastened the growth of large scale farms more than the government programs. And who sold it? The politicians. Who did he sell it to? The 80% of the farmers down here who are getting less than $5,000 payment a year. Yes, their average was $387. They voted for it. Who made the profits? The 20% who got more than $5,000 a year in payments. And so I asked one of them, "What did you do with that government payment every year?" "Well, I bought my neighbors out." Now we wonder what has happened to all of these little farms. Well, the government got what it wanted--a viable agriculture that can give America cheap food at 16.5% of take-home pay. The cheap-food policy in the Homestead Act, the cheap-food policy in the Land Grant College Act, the cheap-food policy in the Extension Service, the cheap-food policy in REA, the cheap-food policy in RTA. All of this has been brought about to improve the life that farmers could have, but also so the farmers could do a better job of producing low cost foods. I don't care who's President of the United States; there is no president who can withstand the onslaught of 98% of the people who only think of cheap food. That's exactly where we are in rural America today, because everybody wants to eat as cheaply as possible. I don't blame them, because there are always other nice things to buy, and trips to go on, and the less you have to pay for food, the more money you have for the wants of life.

Now let's go back and talk about who these big farmers are. In 1929 the U.S.D.A. took a survey and found out there were 7,875 farms in the country that had more than $30,000 gross income. That was a big farm, man alive. And what did they prove in the 1929 U.S.D.A. studies? These farms were more efficient in land, labor and capital than were the smaller farms. Then in 1964 we had another study. Orville Freeman was Secretary of Agriculture at that time and conducted another one. In 1964 they decided to go up to $100,000. Why? Inflation, I suppose. A $100,000 minimum to be called a large farmer. They found out there were 31,401 farms that had $100,000 gross income at that time. They produced 24% of the total production on 1% of the farms. Where are we now? Today we have 109,000 farms that produce more than $100,000 in gross income, and I can look at some right around here and see them, and I don't have to look very far. Four per cent of all farms in America that produce 46.5% of all our produce--they're the guys everybody hates but the consumer.

You know what else they found out? The guys that are running these farms are well educated kids. Most of them have masters degrees. Then Krause and Kyle came along and found out in an intensive study throughout the Midwest that in a period from 1968 to 1970, as far as they were concerned, the farmers who were operating on a fairly good scale saw no upper limits. They pointed out that the man who is operating on a little bigger than average scale is saving $10-$13 an acre in purchase inputs, and he is selling at $5 or $6 more per acre than the

farmer on the smaller scale. Why? Because he's dialing up Duluth, Minnesota, and saying what's the price at the terminal for his grain, and he's getting it. He's dialing up his wholesalers, and the wholesalers are coming to him because many of them are buying more than total volume of the local elevators. I know, I have had it told to me by wholesalers and farmers and elevator managers, by all three.

Now where are these farms and what did I discover? I discovered that the farms where I interviewed in Iowa, the two Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana and Manitoba are twenty-five times the average size farm in America today. I could take most of the farmers that I interviewed, put a blindfold on them, and take them to Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and I could set them down in a chair of a big factory, and I'd say, "Here, you've got thirty days to take over this factory." And you know what? They could all do it. Are they dumb farmers, plow jockeys, hay seeds, hicks? No, they're Walter Ross's, Loren Hillers and Cliff Hagens, and lot of other ones around here. They are the kind of guys that can do what they want to do. The challenge is the thing.

What else did I find out? These are the men who are saying, "When are you going to come out with that bigger tractor?" That's why there is a six-wheel drive, 750-horsepower tractor working about 50 miles west of the Red River right now. It's there. It's painted yellow for decoy. You know who wants to buy it? The man who wants to have a family farm, and he is going to buy that tractor rather than have two small ones and a hired man. The same kind of guy that too many of our state legislators want to legislate right out of business. The average tractor in America on the farm operates 68 acres, but on the farms that I interviewed, the average tractor was tilling 594 acres. Who do you suppose is getting the most out of his tractor?

What else did I find out about these people? Eighty-eight per cent of them have an off-the-farm business. These people were involved in a lot of things. Why? As one man said, "The neighborhood started calling me a land hog when I ended up with 161 quarters of land. I had to do something with the money." He was already supporting the bowling alley in town and financing 17 teams just so the town would take the heat off of him. So you know what the poor guy did? He started buying oil wells. At the time I interviewed him he had 65 producing wells. That's what I told the people of North Dakota, at Northwest Farm Managers meeting in February. The Farmers' Union has done the greatest damage to the state of North Dakota when they caused the people to throw out the Corporate Farm Act, because you undermined one of the basic avenues of their retaining their farm. Now you talk about wanting to raise the minimum estate tax level to $200,000 so you can hold your estate.

There is nobody that is going to drive the family oriented farm off the map. Nobody is going to drive a husband and wife team off the map. I know it. I've got that feeling, my God, if you've got the right wife you can do anything. You might like to know, what my "M's" of agriculture are, and I'm not being facetious now. The five "M's" of agriculture in least importance first and the most important last: mechanization, money, management, motivation, mother. Who saved the family homestead in the '70's, '80's, and '90's and '10's, '20's, and '30's? It's the woman who gave up everything to save that farm. It's the woman who prodded the man. It's the woman and the man together, with the proper motivation, who are excellent managers, who can show the bank where they've been and where they intend to go, who will get all the money they need. There is no shortage of money for agriculture if the farmers make up their minds that they're willing to pay the price that the rest of the industry does to get it. You can buy mechanization. Every time social legislation comes along, that makes things a little bit tougher, the farmer finds out a way to eliminate the man with the hoe. That social legislation that established the minimum $47 an acre for hoeing beet land is the surest way to electronic beet thinners on the American land there is.

Do you know what I found out about every one of these farmers I interviewed? Nobody likes them. You know why nobody likes them? Because they are change promoters and most people just can't stand change. Like one farmer said, "Death, taxes and change are the three absolutes in life. Change is the only one I have any control over."

Some of you guys think that I'm trying to drive rural America right out of rural America. Far from it. We've got more going for us than ever before because everybody needs us three times a day. One-fourth of the world eats something grown in America every day. There is no other industry in the U.S. that is as competitive world-wide as the free-enterprising, family-oriented farm is to the rest of the farmers of the world. We can out-produce African, Asiatic farmers 75 to 1. There wasn't a farmer that I was interviewing who was afraid of going on the free market. They were just hoping they could keep the bunglers out of it. And as a pal of mine in Washington says, and this, of course, will irritate some of you; his name is Butz. He says "The only good thing the farmers have going for them as far as Washington, D.C., right now, is that the politicians can only do half as much to them as they'd like to." We've clout in agriculture like we've never had, and all we need is that all the people who are in agriculture should be working with it. You know who all the people are? Everybody on this faculty ought to be working with it. Everybody in downtown Crookston ought to be working with it. Everybody at Steiger ought to be working with it. Everybody at Versatile ought to be working with it. Everybody at International, at Northland, at Standard Oil, all ought to be backing agriculture, because it takes seven people working off the farm to keep one man going on the land.

We represent 30% of the labor force of America, but only 2% of us are farmers. We've got a stronger rural America than ever, but that doesn't mean a town of 135 people of Meriden, Minnesota, where I grew up. No, but there is Owatonna, Waseca, Fisher, Crookston, Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, Thief River Falls, Hallock--American communities. Note, I did not say, "small towns." They are all agriculture and they ought to all be working with us. Maybe I irritated some of you, but never forget, you haven't got a single person in this crowd who more firmly believes in the family-oriented farm than I do.

"Consumer/producer--the farmer is equally both of these on a rather large scale. If there is to be a compromise in the price for that which the farmer produces, then there must be a compromise in the price for that which the farmer consumes--machinery, fertilizer, fuels, chemicals and labor."

Mark Brekken, Farmer, Crookston, Minnesota

"Farmers have to start thinking a little bit more intelligently about what they can do to help themselves."

Jon Wefald, Minnesota commission of Agriculture. Conference on Rural America Kick-Off Session.

"Wouldn't each of us be more sensitive to the dignity of life, environment and possessions if we could overcome our 'It's mine' attitude?"

Ardell Knudsvig, Science Teacher, Crookston High School.

The Role of Rural America in Creating America's Third Century

Robert Theobald
Noted Author: Speaker
Consultant for Northwest
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What are the issues that face us? What are the issues that are going to lead to a reasonable and dignified life for all of us? I mean that on a world scale, because the world is now too small and too close for us to survive with the Red River Valley or Minnesota or the U.S. alone having a good and dignified life.

As I listened to the last speech, what I heard was a representative of what I call the positive extrapolists. Extrapolists say that things will go on into the future in essentially unchanged ways. They also argue that what has happened and will happen is in general good, desirable, satisfactory and hopeful. Now the question is not whether that future is possible, because I suspect that we could go "x" number of years into the future, continue to push for greater wealth, for a less dignified distribution of income, for fewer people working, and the system would survive--at least for a time.

It's a lovely theory. It's a particularly lovely theory for Minnesota because you can do very nicely out of this new world that's developing. The previous speaker is quite right that agriculture is one of the power structures of our society. That's where a lot of the wealth is going to come from. And if you can kid yourself into saying that we're entitled to everything we can grab off if, and if the U.S. can kid itself into saying that we are entitled to blackmail other countries with our food--and we're not far from that--then we can have a very good life. Now whether we can survive over the long haul is another question. The thing that is necessary to make this theory work is something that I cannot believe. That is that the poor countries are simply going to wait around being hungry and hungrier and starving and dying. If you think that the U.S. in invulnerable to attack, you're crazy. If you think that terrorists will allow us to live well for even a limited period into the future, I think you are wrong. I think our only hope is to learn how to share. By that I do not mean foreign aid. The people who argue against foreign aid are right. We've done at least as much harm as we have good with foreign aid. But the other end of the scale, that we are entitled to have large numbers of people starving in the rest of the world, cannot be right either.

There's a second vision of the future. These people are also extrapolists, but they take the same world and, instead of saying things are getting better, they say things are getting worse. These negative extrapolists have become, I think, the people who would stop nuclear construction, and we're concentrating a great deal of our negative extrapolist thinking around the idea that we cannot afford nuclear power.

The third vision is what I call the romantic vision. It's a vision that is more powerful than we think it is. It's a vision that if we all became nice people tomorrow morning, the world would be a nice place to live and that that is a feasible way of thinking. But if anybody can give me

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any evidence for that statement, I'd be delighted. Our culture has failed to make decisions on energy, ecology and economic growth for the past four years, or where it has made them, has made them in totally contradictory ways. For example, we're asked to buy a car to get economic growth but we are not to run it because that uses gasoline, but if we should run it, we must have a catalytic converter. If we have failed for the past four years to make good decisions, it's a little difficult for me to see why suddenly we're going to become good decision makers.

So I come to what I call a leadership model or a management model. I start from the assumption that we are stuck with the problem of managing the earth. There are very many moments when I wish we hadn't got there because it was so much nicer when most of the decisions were made by God, nature and whatever you like, but not us.

One way to look at this model is to start from one of the major issues that's affecting the state. Is there a new climate pattern developing? Some very competent climatologists argue that we have moved into a different climate stage, that we have had 30 years of incredibly good climate, and that we must now expect things to get steadily worse. Now depending on whether they're right or not, you have a totally different management problem for Minnesota, the U.S. and the world. In one case the food problem is a managable problem and in the other case the food problem is an acute problem which, unless handled [illegible] will swamp us in the immediate future. How do you answer that sort of question?

The assumption that a group of people can make laws and regulations and apply them and take away from us as individuals, localities, and states the right to make our own decisions is not a viable way of thinking. You know, we say all the time that there's going to be a decentralization of power. We say that we're going to have more local decision-making, but nobody ever says, "Well, how on earth do you sort out the consequentialness?" Have any of you thought about the process of "delegalifying," "deregulatizing" the U.S.? We got into all sorts of innovation because we felt that the local community was so selfish, so irresponsible that if it were left to itself, it would never do anything but look after its own central core majority, and the minority could go to hell. And so I come back to that central thesis of mine that the human race either grows up, either begins to care, first of all each individually about themselves, and then about the people they relate to, or we don't make it.

Let's look at some policy issues. Let's look first of all at full employment. Senator Humphrey has been trying to push the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. The Humphrey-Hawkins Bill is, in its drive, a statement that everybody should have a job and that in order to make that happen, there must be government planning. If any of you care at all about freedom or free enterprise, the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill is the most disastrous idea that has yet been promulgated in terms of destroying the freedom of this culture and people in it to make decisions. The only alternative that I see, if one is to be realistic, is to say that we must come up with new options for providing people with incomes, which means a guaranteed income, an option which allows the individual to operate as an institution, to be free, It's an old Jeffersonian idea. He said, "Nobody can be free without land." We can't give everybody land anymore; the equivalent is an income of some sort.

In the area of health we are concerned about a national health insurance system. I think that is dangerous because it will freeze us into a sickness system which says the people are incompetent to look after themselves. We run a sickness system in this culture. Until we learn to run a health system, until we learn to say that the primary job is to keep people well so that they don't go to hospitals and don't go to doctors, we will continue to have this problem.

This leads us to a very messy, untidy and ugly question, one that lies beyond the right to life, and it's the right to death. When can people die? When should people die? The argument that you wait for God's will is not a reasonable argument because the problem is that technology has already taken away from God's will in the way that that was meant. I'm sorry, I'm going to tread on toes now. I have to talk about the right to life. I think abortions are disastrous. But I think anyone who says that, but does not go on to say that this means the need and availability of effective birth control for everybody, is not being reasonable. Unless we become less emotional and less ugly about this issue, it is one of the issues that can tear apart our capacity to talk to and through this set of issues. If we don't want abortions, then we had better make sure that people don't have unwanted pregnancies and we'd better stop burying our heads in the sand.

Justice--we don't have a justice system; we have two justice systems. We have one for the underprivileged and one for the privileged. Now the one for the privileged says that they have suffered enough. For the rich and powerful we believe in redemption; for the poor, we believe in punishment. Justice, it seems to me, requires primarily that we keep our kids out of the criminal culture. Once they get in, the criminal system will create criminals with an 80% success rate. But we won't pay the cost of keeping our kids out, and we won't look at how difficult it is for kids to grow up without coming in contact with the laws. How do kids test themselves? There isn't much space left in our culture, and if they test themselves in the wrong way, they suddenly find themselves in jail.

There are moments when I think that education is an example of our drive for more. We started off and said everybody should be able to read, write and figure, and that would take a couple of years. Then we said if two years of education is good, then four must be better. Then somebody said if four years of education are good, then eight years must be better; and somebody said if eight years are good, then 16 years must be better; and somebody was just about to say if 16 years are good, then 32 years must be better. But how many of your kids are challenged today by their education?

So in my opinion we have to change four fundamental operating principles in the U.S.:

--First, we must give up the idea that more is better than less. There is a lot of evidence that people are not happy with "more." We have to learn to live with the idea of enough.

--Second, we must get away from the idea that people can be equal. Some people will always be more equal than others. We must believe in diversity, which is a different statement. Each of us is of value because of our uniqueness, not because I am equal to you. Each person must be able to use that uniqueness and concern to do good work and develop himself and herself fully. It's a much tougher job than equal opportunity.

--Third, we must get away from the idea of control. Cheating the system is a challenge that people cannot resist.

--The fourth requirement is the reintroduction of religious values--honesty, responsibility, humility, love and respect for mystery.

Now, our culture teaches us that if you and I disagree, one of us is wrong. We can either think of each other in terms of you and I disagreeing and I'm therefore going to fight you, or we can think of each other in terms of you and I have different opinions and can learn from each other.

So we come to rural America. Are you going to allow yourselves to get caught up in the hatreds and tensions of the big cities? Are you going to take that remaining trust you have and begin to develop institutional structures which are based on your capacity for trust? Our institutional structures at the present time are based on the assumption we can't trust each other; therefore, we must have legal and administrative checks and balances. We need some new institutional structures which say that the checks and balances which we do need come from our own personal leadership, discussion, disagreement, agreement and learning. I believe that we either move toward a more human society in the immediate future or a much less human society. It's people like us who are going to determine which it is.

"I have just returned from Egypt where I saw first-hand the efforts of the people who put their land to better use. Their farm methods were crude--plowing with oxen, sowing seed and harvesting by hand; but that is part of their culture. They are growing and exporting rice."
Sam Kuhl, Manager, North Dakota Mill and Elevator, Grand Forks.

"Generosity with knowledge and capital can only work in conjunction with our willingness to learn to develop empathy with others--to allow them the dignity of a place in the system with the means to make it possible for them to give as well as to receive."
Cynthia Cone, Anthropologist, Hamline University, St. Paul. Mini-Conference Speaker.

"Schools should be preparing people to cope with change. It is inevitable that there will be change. . .however, having only a dim notion of the form these changes may embody, the present generation should be educated to deal with new patterns of living as they emerge."
Sr. Eleanor Mueller, Principal, Mount St. Benedict High School, Crookston, Minnesota.

"We don't say the Third World is going to get more and we're going to get less. We say we're all going to get more. We still are convinced of the idea of the growth model. Some may not be, but think through what you're going to give up of what you have for someone else."
Luther Gerlach, Anthropologist, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Mini-conference speaker

Life Changes and Stress in Rural America

Earl Joseph
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I'm very pleased this evening to take you on a very short trip into alternative futures. In an oversimplified form, I'd like to characterize America's three centuries. The first century was the movement to the farm. The second century was the movement away from the farm. The third century appears, with the extrapolation of present trends and the investigation of opportunity-type futures, to be the movement to rural America. But there will be a very definite value-shift change. We will no longer characterize rural America with the farm. I'd also like to talk about some of the change agents, and one of the scenarios I'll be talking bout is best represented by one of the stories from *The Futurist* which dealt with teleconferencing. If we go 10 to 20 years from now, it's probably one of the major technological areas that will have the biggest impact on rural America. The work that's going on with teleconferencing at the present time holds forth as perhaps one of the very few scenarios that allows for the rebirth of rural America.

In the last few years, primarily due to the book *Limits of Growth*, almost the total world, the rich world anyhow, has been turned on to "no growth," and it's interesting to find that this conference is all about growth. At least rural America doesn't believe in the "no growth" philosophy. We find that in all areas of society. About the only area that believes in "no growth" are the rich people in the world who believe that the poor people cannot grow--and that's a value shift. Some of the other future trends that I'll be talking about will deal with other value shifts.

We know something about the impact of the structural environment we surround outselves--e.g. its behavioral impact. Any time you impact on the behavior by limiting it or expanding it, you also change the operative value system. Well, the same type of changes in the behavioral dictates occur from the educational environment, political environment, economic environment, and the spiritual and cultural environments. Of all the environments that you and I have contact with throughout our lives, over 95% of them are human-made or human-modified, which dictates that if we want to have a desirable today, or a desirable future, we have to do something about those environments.

The total of America is in a transition. That transition has been going on for almost a decade. It's the transition from the industrial age into the post-industrial age. By definition the post-industrial age is that age when most of us earn our livelihood in a service-based economy environment. Today, over 60%, almost 70%, of our population earn their livelihood in such service-based occupations. Forty per cent of us do nothing more than collect data, rearrange it, change its packaging and disseminate it. Because for the past 200 years we've been equating rural America with the farm, rural America is in the age previous to the industrial age, the agricultural age. That's the age when you're a slave

**This is an edited, condensed version of Earl Joseph's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.*

to the land, and you're always land poor. America is in a new transition and that transition is a big one. The difference for rural America is that instead of making one leap forward, this transition demands that rural America has to do the equivalent of two leaps forward from the agricultural age into the post-industrial age.

Let's get back to those environments. Is Crookston more loving this year than last year? Have you measured how much more or less it is? How about the institutions here? How about your families? Can you answer the question for your schools? If we don't know the direction that we're moving along the path toward those desirable values, as represented by the desirable value of love, how then can we as citizens--as decision-makers in whatever role, whether we be a farmer, a teacher, a voter, a politician--make the right decisions, or take the right actions, to lead us on a path to optimize the positive value system? It is obvious that society must be able to define the positive values and to measure where we're at on the scale of where we could be for the positive values. What are the positive values for rural America? Though there are some additional values in rural America that urban America doesn't have, and vice versa, you will find from the list of positive values that most of them could exist in both areas.

Let's look at some of the quality-of-life type things associated with rural America vs. urban America in the recent past, so we can get an idea of the forces that are pulling us toward change. Let's look backward a little bit first to find some of the stress areas that are pointing to future change. When we look at the quality of life, rural vs. urban, we find that the current major rural stress is that, on the average, there's lower income in the rural areas--significantly lower. There is more poverty, more older people, fewer jobs, more substandard housing and fewer public services, and in many cases, those that exist are marginal. In rural areas there was a population decline until recent times--now there is a slight growth in a few areas. From the health viewpoint, in the rural regions there are higher levels of infant mortality and higher levels of the type of things that lead to infectuous conditions; trumatic work conditions (injury prone) are more detrimental to humans; there is less access to medical attention when needed and there are fewer doctors and professional health people--the latter is changing in this period and it's one of the bright sides of change.

You'll find that practically all the governments in the world have set up the policies to help and encourage the urban (vs. the rural) areas. So the present trends, are government policies which are detrimental, on the average, for the rural areas. What you can learn from such studies is that the rural areas have been, and are, disadvantaged and discriminated against. But this is a positive pointer to the rural area's future, because there is a law stated by Neil Jacoby about five years ago in the *Center Magazine* where he defined what a social problem is: "A social problem is the gap between current reality and where you expect you could be." Now the wider that gap gets, the more "you have a social problem!" Further, the wider that gap gets, the more the pull is for its correction. One of the opportunity futures that we can forecast by looking at present rural trends, that in almost all cases points to "Doomsdayish" type things for the rural area, points to a strong pull which will pull you beyond the urban area. So let's look further at some of the present trends extrapolated that will develop from these pulls. The first one is to "urbanize" the rural areas. That process is already started. The small town in rural areas has become urbanized. Most of you will not look at that as the bright side for the rural areas. If we take the present energy crisis and couple it with the present trends, we go farther down the decline path for the rural areas, because the lines to get things to the rural areas become longer, requiring more energy. With an energy-deprived future, in other words, when the pot of energy is more or less not enough to go around, and with more people in the urban areas, who's going to get the biggest supply of energy? The rural areas will get enough to create enough food for the urban areas, but not much more.

Let's look at some of the futures that are "seedable." The real question is, will rural America allow a desirable future to be developed for rural Amerca? You see the moment such a future (making rural America more desirable) begins to materialize, the rural area becomes a magnet. It draws people from the urban areas. How many of you want more people around here? How many of you want a higher income? How many of you want to keep the kids in the area? You can't have one without the others. The moment you set up the magnet programs to get a higher income and keep the youth here, it's going to be more attractive than the urban areas. When the urbanites migrate to you, your present value system is to set in motion actions (to keep them out) that do just the opposite (prevent growth and improvement) of what you want.

But that might not be all bad. The most viable, adaptable and most stable institution that society has is the family. The family is best expressed in the rural areas today. When the industrial age came along, we pushed people away from the family to go to work, to school, and to go shopping. As a result, we now wonder why the family in urban America is falling apart. And researchers looking at it say that the only scenario that's desirable for the future is one that maximizes the family. You see, it's the only institution that provides love.

I want to give you a scenario that'll put society back closer to the family, and thus, open up the rural area to be a desirable place. Most of you will not find such a scenario to be desirable in your first thinking of it. Now technology and science allow us to extend the life of things a long time, which really brings us back to the value system of rural America up until the time radio and television hit rural America. If you bought a hammer, plow, or a surrey with the fringe on the top, you'd expect it to last throughout your lifetime. The return of that scenario

is a 100% sure bet for the future. We must go to a non-throw-away future society. How many of you would like to live to be 150 years of age? If we look at nutrition research, medical things, spare parts surgery, genetic manipulations, and the research on aging, our expectation is that we'll have the science by the year 2000 that would allow us to take on the calendar 150 years to reach physical age 60. In other words, you'd be able to live a useful, youthful life.

How many of you would like to have an automobile that'd last 60 years and never need repair? We have the science to do it. If we build things to last a long time, who needs workers in factories? In other words, the city doesn't need factory workers if we build things that last a long time. But what are you going to be working at? You see, if we continue the trajectory of the mechanization on the farm, we don't need them to do the farm thing; nor, as can be seen, do we need them to do the factory thing. What are they going to be doing? Producing food? Why do they need to produce food? There's a myth that exists in rural America that American farms need to feed the world because at the present time a small percentage of Americans (less than 5% of us) feed America and many people elsewhere in the world. Now I ask you, is the problem in the world to produce the food? No, it's not a problem to produce the food. Most of the world will soon have the technology and the resources to feed themselves. In fact, in India, if they would use some of the management know-how that we have here and some of the farming technology, their yields of crops would be much higher than ours because they have better weather conditions so they can grow many more crops a year than we can. The problem is not to grow that food and the problem is not distribution. The problem is the social-political things, which again comes right down to the value system. Once the world fully recognizes that, and that's not too far away, can you imagine the impact on rural America, if rural America continues to equate itself with farming, and when the rest of the world finds out it doesn't need rural America? Imagine your economic impact.

Let's get back to the telecommunications scenario. The key resource in the post-industrial age is information. We're on an expotential growth curve on the need and the use of information. Today in labs we can create a flat screen television-like remote device--let's call it a "paperless book or newspaper." In some cases it has dials and knobs, or a light pen tha allows you to write on it; in other cases it has hardware that recognizes your voice, and you can talk to it. We call wuch new technology "distributed smarts." You're going to see some "distributed smarts" soon in the vacuum cleaners and the toasters in the household. You're going to see them in the automobile before the end of the decade. They're already beginning to use them on the Singer sewing machine and a few other things. The voice recognition and reply stuff won't come until maybe 1980. Can you imagine having an intelligent conversation with your toaster, your vacuum cleaner or your automobile? Because we're going the "smart machine" route in the future, it could totally open up rural America to be a desirable place to live since these "smarts" can be married with the communication system. When we go the full route of that marriage, which is about 1985, you don't have to be in the factory to do the factory thing. You can be 10,000 miles away and have the same access. Where would most people rather live if they had remote access to the goodies like big income, theater and everything else? In rural America, of course. What I'm trying to tell you is that the magnet pulling society to rural America is already beginning to be grown--all that's missing is the delivery system to be put into place.

Let's go a little bit further into such a future. In the laboratories, notably at the University of Utah, but at the other places too, they're building little tiny micro-television tubes about the size of pens and they're putting them on the bows of the glasses. With a proper lens system you can fill up your whole visual space with written words or, since there are two of them, you can float 3-D images out in space in front of you. In other words, I could project, if I had that fancy pair of glasses, each and every one of you sitting out there, and you could be wherever you wanted to be rather than in this room. By making such "glasses" smart with "positional informers," the wearer can walk around and among the imaged 3-D environment--e.g. walk up to imaginary, three-dimensionally imaged persons and shake their hands. Of course, they get nothing but thin air in the process, but the key thing is you can inter-react with the images. We expect such technology to be in usage by the mid-point of the next decade. Such technology can also give vision to blind people and is being experimented with. At the present time there is in the neighborhood of one to four billion dollars per year going into developing such a telecommunications future.

What's the other part of that scenario? We can send up a communication satellite for significantly less cost than it takes to build the average office building, school, or hospital (i. e. second homes). The difference is if we build the products called buildings, we only service people in the few square miles around them; whereas, if we send up a communications satellite with the proper devices on the ground (flat screens or micro-TV glasses) then it only takes 5 to 15 of those satellites to substitute for most of those second homes across the total country. Now notice the future that opens up for the expected energy-deprived future. We would need to build far fewer second homes (schools, offices, factories, hospitals, churches). Imagine the energy and material savings in the construction areas; imagine further that we wouldn't need to heat and cool them. Further, imagine you wouldn't have to travel back and forth and consume that thing we're getting a little bit low on--oil. This forcing function from the so-called energy crisis is so strong that such future is being seeded very rapidly. That is the future that totally opens up rural America because it gets rid of those second homes and the need to be close to them.

I'll come back to one of my early questions. Do you want all of the people who will be flooding in to rural America? At the present time there are not enough people in rural America. You've been expressing that for hundreds of years here in rural America. And in the cities there are too many people. What seems to be developing in the next decade or two are scenarios to spread people out, and we're already seeing the birth pains of that future. You've seen it in the late '60's and the early '70's when the hippies had the movement of going back to the earth. Did you welcome them with open arms? How about the hobby farmer? Now that people are coming back to the rural areas, your value system is "we don't want them." You're going to see many more people migrating in droves to the rural areas in the next two decades. Thus, things are developing outside of the rural areas that are going to totally change the character of rural America.

Let's return our electronic scenario and look at how government may be impacted. Jefferson said, "If we want to have a democracy, we need citizens that are literate enough to tell whether or not the politicians are lying." Let's put on our micro-TV-glasses to see how it could be. When senators, legislators, etc. are in that closed room designing that new law or that new way of spending our money, we "could be there" even though we're here in Crookston. We could "be" in Washington through that electronic system which is a richly inter-connected communications network. It's an open information network in such a form that any action, verbalization and transfer of information is on the communications network. Obviously, you and I could not watch and listen to all of that, but one of the things that comes along with the system is a filter to filter out and make us currently aware of that part which would impact upon us or be of interest to us. The techniques are known to do it. In so doing we could implement a new form of communication system that's called the current awareness function. Thus, in the future, when those people are doing things that are going to impact upon us, our current awareness function rings, and we're made aware that it's going on as if we were there participating. You and I would most likely not be up to date on the issues, when the current awareness function rang; we wouldn't be that literate. That's the time when our future formalized education system goes to work. It becomes a life-long, real-time educational system for educating the totality of the adult public as well as the youth public. We could thus raise our level of knowledge on the issues being debated in the democratic process at the time when it's occurring rather than years after the fact. It might take a few minutes, hours, days or months for an individual to become informed, depending upon our knowledge level, but when we become informed, then we can put our "two cents worth" into the communications network.

Obviously, a million of us cannot talk to one senator. What does the current awareness function look like at the other end for that process? It's a "thermometer" pointing to the real-time, informed, public opinion on the issues being debated in the design of that new law, guiding the people to whom we give our power of attorney in the way they vote on the issues. What I've told you is that the technology has now advanced to the point which would allow us to create that participatory citizen democracy that our forefathers 200 years ago tried to create. we now have the ability to create that type of democracy, but what comes along with it is a revitalization for the rural areas in the form that will make it the most desirable place to live in America. Will we allow it?

I tried to give you a few of the trends and scenarios, ideas of the impact of present stress, on the future and some of the stresses and changes that are coming up for rural America. There are many more. The ones that I tried to give you today are in the category of what we call "probability number." They are a 100% sure bet. The question is no longer "if"; the real question is "when." Some of the seeding of such futures is going on now where parts of America could have that rural rebirth around 1980; although, we should expect that the "road block" would be such that it would push it off at least until 1985 or 1990.

There are three things that society can no longer afford: anything that's energy-intensive, anything that's material-intensive, and anything that's labor-intensive. The key thing about the service economy or service-based industries is that they are labor-intensive. Thus, the key area to automate at the present time, and in the next decade along with energy related areas, is the service-based occupations. If we follow that trend, we would expect that for the classical surface areas, less than something like 20% of the population will be required to supply those services. What then are we going to be working at when we won't also be needed on the farm or in the factory. What are the alternatives?

Now, to answer the question about what will we be working at, we can go to the value system that we've been professing for thousands of years. In the Christian societies, what was the major value system that we have professed? Brotherly love. Isn't that the whole message? That's the professed value system. Is it the operative value system? Not yet. In other words, what's wrong with being paid for the more loving, brotherly love you express? Why do we have to be paid for the more harm we do to society? Why shouldn't we be paid for the more good we do for society? Today that's a foolish suggestion in the political arena. If you look at the youth and the new studies of value systems, that's becoming one of the key scenarios being looked at. How many of you would like to work at that type of job rather than what you're doing now? If you go into colleges, over 90% of the hands will come up--if you go into the high schooland grade schools, likewise. In fact, if you go to the sixth grade and below, most of the students will tell you that, without your having to tell them, which is an interesting value situation in America. You see, if you have to spend all your time working to get enough food and clothes, you don't have time to worry about the next person, you don't have time to express the brotherly love outside of your arena. Thus, we have visions of desirable futures, some new, some old; by coupling them together we can make the future a place in which all of us would desire to live.

Day 2

People, Land and Water

Future Organization of Rural America

George Donohue
Professor, Sociologist
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The longer the projection into the future one attempts, in some respects, the less risk involved. The remarks I make today about the future are restricted to the period between now and the year 2000.

Given the assumption that change by and large is continuous, has continuity with the past, and that it is a highly ordered and controlled process, it follows that what we will see in the year 2000 is largely an outgrowth of what is already occurring in our society. This is providing that no unusual catastrophies such as a total nuclear war occurs during the next 25 years. One must also assume that there will be no radical shift in the distribution of world political, economic, or military power during the same time period. In addition there will be no basic change in our society in the role of private investment and the rights of the investor. While additional social controls may be placed upon capital use in the system, the main thrust of the system will still be one of private property, with some degree of public control rather than outright public ownership and control.

The pattern of farm ownership, largely that of individual family enterprise, will not be altered appreciably in the nation or in the North Central Region. There will be continued concentration of production by the upper 20% of farm owners and there will be further differentiation of this group, economically and socially, from the bulk of farm operators who are more commercially marginal or of a part-time residential nature. The technology of farming will continue to make it possible for more and more land to be operated by fewer farm operators. The yields from these lands, due to improved hybrids, cultivation and other agricultural inputs, will be largely unabated. The style of life of the past farm era will still be maintained largely by the part-time and the marginal economic producer, while the patterns of agricultural productivity and interaction among farm operators in the upper 20% will be oriented to the national and international scene.

I will restrict my remarks on population as a factor in the future of rural social organization to between now and the year 2000. While there are some indications of shifts in some areas of population distribution due to decentralization in the metropolitan area and centralization in some of the non-metropolitan areas, the basic pattern for most of our monolithically-structured agricultural rural communities will follow the historic patterns of relative, and in some cases absolute, decline. The prospects are slim for most of the western North Central Region to experience great diversification in the social structure of the smaller communities.

It would appear that the impact of transportation during the next 25 years on the rural community will not be as appreciable as it was during the last 20 years of highway building and abandonment of rail transportation. This does not mean that transportation will not be a problem in the rural community; it simply means that the technology of transportation will be largely truck and automobile on existing

This is an edited, condensed version of Dr. Donohue's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.

highways without major modification.

The next 20 years will probably see some periodic energy shortages. Energy supplies, although more costly, will be adequate and will not require appreciable modification in living and other organizational patterns in rural areas. Energy as a factor in production and transportation may well have consequences for the entire social system by the year 2050 if more effective utilization of present forms of energy are not forthcoming.

The most basic factor impinging upon the organization of rural society in the next quarter century may be in the area of social technology of decision-making in the system as a whole and its impact upon rural areas in particular. The development of policy which takes into consideration the goals of differentiated groups is usually considered a product of political activity which culminates in some form of legislation. Most of this legislation, of course, is drafted by professionals in the agencies in which the policies are to provide guidelines. A great deal of care is exercised regarding public input to the agencies, decision-making and final action on any particular decision that has consequences beyond the individual and/or group under consideration. There are hearing procedures having relatively rigorous procedures for the presentation and acceptance of various types of evidence on behalf of one point of view or another. Indeed, it is this mode of social technology that has had the greatest impact upon rural areas during the last decade and will have greater consequences during the next 25 years on the manner in which social decision-making occurs in our rural sector. It appears that many professionals accept the notion that the complexity thus far achieved is too great for the laity but that it is not, as yet, too great for the professional to comprehend. Often the regulations promulgated by the agencies have this implicit assumption behind them and thus strengthen considerably the role of the professional as decision maker in the system.

The nature of the issue, whether it happens to be the Boundary Water Canoe Area, the mining of taconite and the disposal of waste, the designation of corridors for power transmission, the siting of power plants or the development of sewage and solid waste disposal facilities, does not alter the pattern of relationship among the agency, professionals and the lay public. Professionals talk to professionals and the rules governing presentation and acceptability of evidence are largely those developed by the professional groups. Whether it be the workers in the plants at Silver Bay or the farmers of Stearns County, there is a general assumption that they are working in terms of their individual self-interest or their corporate group and, thus, are not qualified to make judgments in the public interest. The model of decision-making in the system has gone from laisse-faire competition of individuals within the community to the laisse-faire competition among communities to a model which pits the interest of any particular group, whether they be miners, farmers or sportsmen, against the combined interest of all other groups in society. When each action of a community must be considered and reviewed in the context of the total system and be compatible with the large system, it becomes quite evident that decision-making on any significant issue is no longer the domain of the rural community. The degree to which communities will have a voice in the decision making depends entirely on the degree to which they are willing to actively participate in regional commissions and create a social technology which directly involves them in the planning and decision making process.

It is in this area of public policy and public decision making that rural communities will have to undergo their greatest degree of adjustment in the next quarter of a century. A failure to meet the challenge of developing effective social technology for representation of individual communities may well lead to wholesale alienation and withdrawal with rather massive consequences for residents in the relatively isolated rural communities.

In some respects the rural community may provide a fertile ground for experimenting with relatively radical changes in social organization, particularly the relationship between the larger system and its constituent parts. The rural community may be one of the remaining opportunities for creating a system which balances the costs to the larger system in stability and control with a degree of freedom of option for parts of the system.

"It is the temptation of the times to allow someone else to assume decision-making when the consequences are unpopular or when heavier burdens, greater sacrifices and radical life-style changes are demanded. I, for one, want to be in on at least discussing the alternatives."

Sr. Janice Miller, St. Joseph's Provincial House, Crookston, Minnesota.

People, Justice, Land

Rev. John McRaith
Director
National Rural Life Conference
Des Moines, Iowa*

As a nation we have set a remarkable goal for ourselves: justice and liberty for all--a goal that I think we should take more seriously, a goal that is often understood in light of only self-interest. But the day has come when we must broaden for ourselves as a nation and as a world what it means to say "justice and liberty for all." It's a lofty goal. It's a difficult goal. No nation on earth has ever stated it quite like that. We, in a sense, are on a line; everyone watches to see if mere human beings can ever achieve so difficult a objective. Our 200-year history notes the successes and failures, to be sure.

One of the great problems is that all too many of us act as though in 1776, that the goal became a fact. The only thing that became a fact in 1776 was that we were free to seek justice and liberty for all; so we continue to seek that, well aware of the fact that we have not achieved it. Somehow or other one gets the feeling that if you say that we have not achieved liberty and justice for all, either within our own country or as our nation as part of the world, that you're un-American, that you're opposed to democracy, or that you must be communistic, socialistic, facist or something. That's nonsense. It's a goal that for many of us sits very well with our own religious beliefs.

If we're ever going to reach a point where people will be able to make decisions, there's a great need for more and more knowledge on the part of people. I don't think our problem with government in the U.S. is with the elected officials at all. We have a crack at them every two years, four years, six years, and we can attach all our sins to them as they did in the Old Testament and chase them out into the woods and bring in some new. The problem in our government is the bureaucracy. It's the bureaucracies because the average person, the little people like ourselves, have not been able to keep up with the kind of knowledge that is needed in order to call them to task to make them responsible. I do not advocate that we do away with that kind of government. Obviously, there is a need for government. There's a need for government that can respond and there's a need for people to have knowledge.

We hear that word "justice" used so often. We know it's a national goal and, as far as I know, that goal has never been changed. We have leaders in government who would seem to adequately reflect an unjust society. There are those who would try to pretend that the politicians are the "baddies" in our society, that those who are in government are bad and that the people are good. We find the very reflection of ourselves in our government. If we don't like what we see, perhaps it's best we look not to Washington, not to St. Paul, but to ourselves and to our own little communities. I'm in favor of local government, but I have experienced across this nation in the last five years enough injustice in local governments as you'll ever find at the federal level. We will never have justice within our nation until we find it in our own homes, in our own communities.

This is an edited, condensed version of Rev. McRaith's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.

There's one other assumption, perhaps, as we reflect on the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the whole attitude that we were all created equal. There's a great Lutheran minister, Dr. E.W. Mueller, who speaks about this in terms of the idea that we were all created with equal worth, but God knows we were not all created equal. It's better we begin to talk about people with equal worth if we're going to seriously seek justice and liberty, and then begin to realize that not everybody, even in this great nation, has an equal opportunity. Certainly we are all not equal even in the talents, the abilities that God has given us, to say nothing about the opportunities.

We live in a world where peace, we say, is a great value, but somehow or other we seldom are willing to pay the price for peace. We often have heard within religious circles that there will be no peace until first there is justice. It's as though it's some great mystery. I can't find that it's a mystery at all. You take a bag of candy or candy bars to any family with five kids and give the candy to two. You'll soon know that justice must precede peace and that peace will be built on justice. It's a question of whether we're willing to pay the price. I maintain that people can change. I spent 12 years in Catholic education in our parochial schools in my home diocese, four of them in administration. The most often asked question, as I reflect back, was --"Was that fair?" I soon learned that justice was not something that I could dictate, but that justice came from their taking a situation and beginning to pull together people who had an interest or who had a problem within that area. Using that as a model, I think that's the kind of society we have to begin to develop.

"You can't," they keep telling me, "do anything. You've got to start people out at the levels of self-interest; people will become involved when it's self-interest involvement." If we have committed ourselves to a society in which the only time that anybody is interested in anything is when it affects them, well, this is ridiculous. We must begin to examine ourselves constantly when we answer the question, "Is that fair?" We have to answer in light of "Is it fair then for the common good?" We may talk about political or economic or educational systems, welfare systems, marketing systems, whatever, but if we are part of an unjust system, then we have a responsibility to change that system.

When you begin to talk about changing political and economic systems, people grow nervous. I'm only saying that these are human-made systems and, therefore, are systems that should promote and increase the assurance of the common good. If they don't produce that for which they were made, they should be changed. We're not talking about destroying the system; that's the other alternative. Too often I hear people talking about systems changing people. That's nonsense. If our economic system is not producing that which we would hold as a value, then we'll make it do that. If it means getting inside and changing, tightening and loosening some things, let's be about it. You start talking about the five or six of the grain companies that control 90% of exported grain in the free world; you start saying "Let's put some controls on this," and they begin to holler. There's some "little" threat in the Congress which suggests that there is some kind of monopoly in the oil business. I don't know what the answer is, but I know that it's worth talking about. Simply because Standard Oil tells us there's no problem is no sign I should buy that. That I might question what some of the great companies of the U.S. and the multi-nationals tell me, doesn't make me un-American.

We talk about future systems and we talk about land. We don't need to continue on this road of the land going into the hands of fewer and fewer people. Future systems in terms of justice are extremely important. I think that one of the greatest issues that stands before the American people today is who will own these precious natural resources. If you get down into Appalachia and places like this, you pretty well know who owns it. You also see the messes they left behind. Appalachia is not a big mystery in America. We keep running around churches and government ringing our hands saying, "What are we going to do?" We all know what we should do. Appalachia is a rich part of the U.S. All of the wealth has been drained out of that area with absentee ownership. We can build all the little craft shops down there we can think of, but until that natural resource begins to be seen as something besides the absolute property of a handful of coal companies, Appalachia will remain poor.

The basic thing we have to keep in mind is whether or not land, food, natural resources are gifts, or are they commodities? It makes all the difference in the world. We like to talk about these natural resources, particularly land and people, as being very separated. But we're so horribly dependent upon that, I don't think we can afford that luxury. Is land a gift or is it a commodity? Well, you say those are just words. I don't know if they are, because I suspect that if I really believed that land is a gift from God and that it belonged to everybody, it would have some determination on my behavior. If I really believed that food was a gift, would I waste it? I'm not suggesting food and land shouldn't be privately owned. I favor private ownership a great deal, because I like to know who it is whose responsible for the land that I feel God has given to everybody.

Some years ago, in 1974, at the time of the world food crisis, the Catholic bishops of the U.S. issued a pastoral statement following the World Food Conference in Rome. At one point in this pastoral statement, they referred to food as a "unique commodity," and I objected. I was involved at the staff level of preparing this, and I said, "Let's call it a 'unique gift.' " And someone said, "You country boy from Minnesota, you don't understand much what's going on. We've got commodity exchanges, we've got commodity markets, commodity groups. You come along with this gift business. The people only understand commodities." I said, "All right, fine." So since then I

apologized and was asked to lead prayer before meals. In any state that comes out something like this: "Bless us, oh Lord, and these Thy commodities which Thou has given." Well, I didn't know that people didn't understand that. I was shocked to know that I had been saying this prayer all these years and nobody knew what I was talking about. But when we talk to God we're not going to call them commodities. They're gifts. We thank Him for them. I'd hate to call that a gift because you might think you had a right to some of it. So if I call it a commodity, then we can bargain, and profit becomes the sole determiner as to what happens to this. I'm not saying that we don't need profit; God knows we do--a reasonable profit. But that should not be our overriding concern when we talk about the necessities of life.

So in light of that, let me just make a few quick suggestions. First, we need a massive educational program telling people, not on the basis of what we think might happen, but information from the standpoint of saying what you think would be the best and what the alternatives are. I think it can be done by our educational institutions. It can be done certainly by the churches. Somehow or other we think of land and food as being a farmer's issue. That's foolishness. I heard it so often in Minnesota with the drought, "The poor farmers, what's going to happen to them?" and "The state of Minnesota, they'll be gypped out of a billion dollars income." But I haven't heard anyone crying crocodile tears for the starving people of the world who won't eat, perhaps, because there's a drought in parts of Minnesota. And so we need a massive educational program that tells us more about how we must be involved in making decisions. You see, decisions are made as to whether we will have the good land-use policy, for example, for this country in Chicago and Los Angeles--not in Crookston, not in this part of the state. The kind of land-use policy that will be in the rural areas in the state of Minnesota will be made by people in the metropolitan areas and that decision will be based on almost no information. So I call upon the churches to become involved in this.

Secondly, let's find out exactly who owns the land, the minerals, the water rights. There's a whole research department of the U.S. Agricultural Department. I heard a man talking from there last week in Morganstown, West Virginia. He stood up in front of a group of people and he said, "We don't know who owns the land in this country." Well, that's a bad state of affairs. We need to know who owns the land, because it's going to determine whether or not we're going to have the land in the hands of a few people or not. If the land is in the hands of a few people, I want to know that, because that's going to determine what kind of legislation I would suggest we have. You have two pieces of landmark legislation in Minnesota. One is the Family Farm Act that you have which limits outside corporations, and the other is the new legislation that should give some aid to young people getting started in agriculture.

Third, we need a national law that would absolutely prevent certain classes of agricultural land from being developed. In ball-park figures, we have a world population of four billion growing to six to eight billion people. Land which will produce food and fiber is going to become more and more precious as time goes on, and I think we need a law that would prevent the development on good agricultural land of highways or urban development. We lose roughly a million acres a year in our country to development of non-agricultural things.

Fourth, we need a national family farm act, something like you have in the state of Minnesota.

Fifth, we need a graduated land tax, because, if it's true that it's bad to have corporations involved in agriculture, then, as far as I'm concerned, it's just as bad to have a family corporation that buys up the country. I can't see any great difference. And we have individuals who have farmed more land than they need or even that's efficient for them to have. It would allow the opportunity for as many others as possible, if the free enterprise system is good, and I think it has many things to recommend it, to be involved in owning the free enterprise system. A graduated land tax would simply say that after a certain amount of land, the taxes would go up to the point where it would diminish your value in keeping it. We need something like the Saskatchewan Plan in order to make it possible for people to get involved in agriculture.

We need a tough anti-strip-mining bill in this country. The stories that you hear as you go through Appalachia from the people would anger you so much to know the powerlessness of people in the hands of those kinds of corporate structures.

We need an unearned increment tax. We've got to begin to do something about the speculators, particularly in the area of land. I recently had a very interesting example of that. I was in Illinois three years ago, and I remember well talking to a farmer, and land had sold in central Illinois for $2,300, and it seemed unheard of. I was back there in the early part of June, and land in that same area that day had sold for $4,090 an acre. I have a good friend in Guatemala and I remember him saying that land in Guatemala was terribly important to the powerlessness of the people. He was trying to purchase land so that the people could have gardens so they wouldn't be absolutely beholden to the large land owners. He was saying that land sold for $4,000 and $5,000 an acre. That was 12 years ago, and I thought he was crazy, but we're almost there.

What does that tell me as far as society is concerned? It tells me that the little folks won't own any land--not even enough to build a house on, much less to grow anything or to have any say in it. But even more importantly, it tells me that the price of food and other necessities of life will continue to go up. The farmer who has to go out and pay $4,000 an acre for land is going to have to have more money

for that which he produces. But if we could get an unearned increment tax, it would eliminate some of the pressures that are pushing land up, I think. Much land is being pushed up because of farmer bidding against farmer. It's not the young farmer that can afford it; it's that one whose already established. If there was some limitation to the amount of land that someone could own, that land would then, I assume, become available to others.

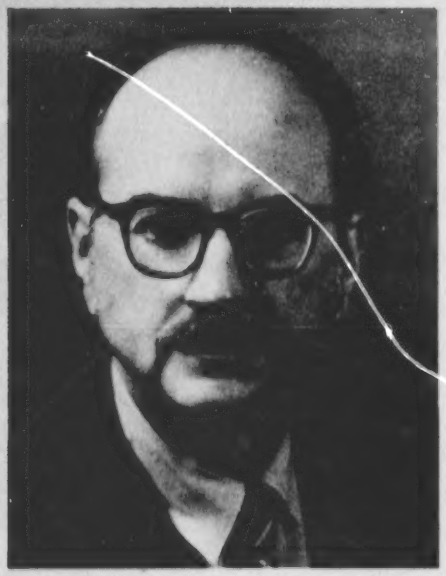
We must begin to go to our land grant colleges to do research on the kind of things Dr. Donohue mentioned. What is involved in smaller ownership of land? What is involved in small business operations? What are the possibilities? We need to do some research in the whole area of what pesticides and herbicides do. These are not necessarily answers but I think they're factors that should be built in to any type of discussion. If we're going to have decisions made by the people, then they must come from people like yourselves, and they must be based on information coming from many different areas, sifting through, talking about it, finding that which is most just for all of the people, not just for special self-interest groups.

"I believe that there is enough food available for every one to have an adequate diet if it were distributed fairly--and if the 'haves' were willing to share some of their affluence with the 'have-nots.'"

Etha Pester, Crookston, Minnesota farm woman.

"All of the crucial issues that the world faces today exist in our own communities right now. The whole phenomena of global interdependence is no further away than right outside the door in the decision-making units in your own communities. How we deal with issues locally largely determines how and when we deal with issues on a national and international basis."

Victor Pavlenko, Director, CENCOAD, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S.D. Mini-Conference Speaker.



Renewal of Population Growth in Rural and Small-Town America

Calvin Beale
Population Studies Group
USDA
Washington, D.C.*

Twenty years ago in the Department of Agriculture, a colleague and I put out an annual report on trends in the farm population. Each year we would be saying that there had been an out-migration of a million and a half people leaving the farms. We were the bearers of bad news and we were very unpopular because no one wanted the farm population to decline. When we put the report out, congressmen of the opposition party felt obliged to comment on it. Now this was in the Benson administration in the Department of Agriculture, so Democrats in Congress would immediately issue a statement noting this huge decline, deploring it and blaming it all on the Republican administration. In the 1960's it was a Freeman agricultural administration. We were still taking about a million people a year leaving the farm, so Republicans in Congress would issue a statement each year condemning this change and blaming it on the administration in power. What it really illustrated was the fact that the set of forces causing the out-migration were extremely powerful. There was a complex of issues reflecting a profound technological revolution. The out-migration was inevitable. It did not really result from agricultural policies, except that they certainly affected the timing of it. When I would hear a politician making a speech of this type, I would find myself asking retorically, "If that's the explanation here, what's causing the out-migration of farm people in the Soviet Union, Sweden, England, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Australia, and in every other semi-advanced nation of the world?" The movement is something that has transcended political systems and national boundaries.

We couldn't keep taking a million people out of the farm population every year. We weren't going to abandon farming, so the end had to come sometime. The widespread turnaround in rural and small town population that is observed nationally since 1970 had begun in some areas before that and was a little more delayed in others. It's of major significance and it's happening much faster than I thought it would. In the 1960's we had a net loss of about three million people from the non-metropolitan counties of the U.S. In the '50's it was more like six and seven million in the decade. Since 1970, however, an average of about 400,000 more people each year have moved into the non-metropolitan counties of the U.S. than have moved out of them. I want to stress that it is dramatic, multi-faceted change. Few movements are simple. It can be shown to affect 48 of the 50 states, and those two exceptions are small, semi-metropolitan New England states. It is not just a sprawling out from metropolitan areas. That is taking place, yes, but the larger trend is much more than that. It's just not people coming out since the late '60's, there has been a near end to the displacement out of agriculture and an absolute end to the displacement of people out of mining, which is a major rural industry. The drop in coal mining in Appalachia, for example, ended in 1969. Since 1970 we've had more rapid growth of employment in trade services, communication, transportation, construction, every major industry category in the non-metropolitan areas, than we have had in the metro area--with the exception of government. Government employment is still growing more rapidly in the metropolitan areas, but that is mostly state and local government expansion rather than federal.

**This is an edited, condensed version of Calvin Beale's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.*

There are also non-economic aspects to this movement. The ecological and environmental movements, the youth revolution, have all effected a change in attitudes of people as to where they would like to live, what scale, what size of community they would like to live in. In addition we've had a major increase in the number of retired people. The number of people who as retired workers receive benefits under the social security system has been increasing about five per cent a year each year since 1970; whereas, the total population has been growing only by about one per cent a year. Millions of these people have a comparable private pension plan which when added to social security gives them not just a survival income, but a good, decent retirement income. Most of them don't move when they retire, but those who do, move disproportionately to rural and small town areas.

Many people have become discouraged with life in the major cities. Problems of crime, drugs, pollution, congestion and racial conflicts have all beeen factors in motivating people either not to migrate to such areas or to move away if they already live there. The small metropolitan areas--the Rochester, Fargo, Sioux Falls types--have been behaving demographically more like the rural areas and very small towns. They are attracting more migrants into them now than before. The cutting point seems to be up around the level of three quarters of a million population. Above that, areas are either having out-migration or attracting, on the average, fewer migrants than before. Below that, they are increasing the trend of movement in or reversing from decline to growth.

Not every county is now growing. We still have about 600 rural counties that are declining in population. But that's only half the number that were declining in the '60's and their rate of decline is typically just a fraction of what it used to be. Some of the growth is going into very small towns. Some of it is going in to the open country. It is not simply a growth inside places such as Crookston or Thief River Falls. Ten years ago you could hardly read an article on the small town without the term "dying small town." A stereotype like this is usually based on a kernel of truth, and that one is based on a kernel of truth. That steotype has colored in a pernicious way our public thinking on small towns. Most of them under 2,500 population were not declining, and of those that were, only a minority were having major declines. But it's true that in Minnesota and the Dakotas, there were many little places with two, three, four hundred people that were declining in population. Most rural towns of less than 2,500 people in the U.S. have had a decline in the number of retail, consumer-oriented business establishments. I think this has misled us into thinking that they were all having declines in population. The dying in the small towns has mostly been a death of business functions, but in a majority of them the residential function has remained. Today this residential function is increasing. People are increasingly living out in the open country, building homes, occupying the abandoned farm homes, living in small villages.

I don't know what the future will hold for this land. There are a combination of forces now acting here that have built up in momentum that will last at least through this decade and take us into the next. The trend seems to place more people in the kind of community in which they would like to live, with respect to size and scale of settlement. It is not an energy conservative form of settlement. What would happen if we had another oil embargo or if the price of gasoline got up to where it is in Europe at $1.25 or $1.30 a gallon? Rural people do have a greater dependence on private transportation and gasoline than the urban people. Data show that they consume more gasoline per capita. If we had a true energy crisis, this could affect the movement we see.

The trend does change the age composition of the local population, many of whom were getting rather old. It does create a demand for new services or expanded services. It creates water and sewage demands and problems if the growth takes place too quickly. So often social movements don't happen at the pace that would be most desirable even if the overall trend itself is desirable. What is happening is of a nationally significant character and, like that earlier movement from the farm, it is international in its character too. We're leading the way, but reports of decentralization are beginning to come in from other highly urbanized nations in the world, that, in fact, have all the urbanization they need.

"Farmers are under the same pressures as the energy industry, the taconite industry and every other part of the system to intensify--to get more out of less. They're going to do it by increased use of water, energy and other resources."

Luther Gerlach, Anthropologist, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Mini-conference speaker.

Focus on Northwest Minnesota

Hazel Reinhardt
Minnesota State Demographer*

I started out in this business before we demographers were "spreading the good news" or were terribly welcome speakers in rural areas. In those days people expressed concern about what would happen to rural areas with the decline of population. Now, I find irony in that. We're out in rural areas talking about growth and trying to get people to think about what that means. That usually doesn't please anyone either.

Minnesota, like the nation, is experiencing a redistribution in population, but at a slightly lesser magnitude than at the national level. First of all, our growth rate is a little less than it is in the nation. Secondly, the areas growing due to the redistribution of people in the nation are those areas which are not highly agricultural. The state of Minnesota has a large portion of its area that is highly agricultural which has moderated this trend. Nonetheless, the period between 1970 and 1975 shows that there has been a faster rate of change in the counties in which there are no places of over 50,000 than in the counties that have large population centers or that are in commuter range of these large centers.

We are interested in how this movement is distributed among various areas of the state. The fastest growth is in north central Minnesota in an area characterized by lakes and trees. People are finding it a nice place to live and a desirable retirement area. And though some counties have continued to lose population, by and large, they are not in northwestern Minnesota, but in southwestern Minnesota. Most of the towns in this area are growing towns. I thought it would be interesting to look at some new data and ask the question, "Do the counties in this northwestern Minnesota get an exchange of population from the Twin Cities?" Yes, there is an exchange, and not only do people leave here and go to the Twin Cities, but also a rather large number of people, given the size of the counties, come here each year. The greatest exchange occurs in the counties of this area that have urban centers, Pennington County, and Polk County.

In northwestern Minnesota, the county that is most rapidly growing is Pennington. It ranks among the 10 or 15 most rapidly growing counties in Minnesota. Does that mean that it will continue to be rapidly growing? We don't know, but we do know that it has definitely changed what was thought to be the future of that area as little as five or six years ago.

Not only is the distribution of population changing, but the composition is also changing. One of the rapidly changing characteristics, particularly in rural areas in Minnesota, is the very large proportion of our population that is now over 65 years of age. Several counties in this area had about 20% of their total population over the age of 65 in 1975. The whole notion of the U.S. growing older seems to have hit the popular press in the last month. Many of you have seen the articles on the "graying of America." What I think we have in this area of

**This is an edited, condensed version of Hazel Reinhardt's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.*

Minnesota is a leading edge on that phenomenon. We have the percentage of population over 65 today that we might anticipate for the U.S. as a whole in the year 2016 or 2020. Some of the issues created by an older population will be issues for people here before they will be issues on the national level.

There are other age changes in our population that are likely to be painful for us. We had an abnormally large number of births in the 1950's and, once we came down from that high peak, we are feeling the effect of that decline in our school age population which is dropping anywhere from 35-50%.

We are faced with a housing need issue. The relationship between the need for housing and growth in population will not be as clear-cut in the 1970's and '80's as it was in the 1960's and '50's. In the past when we saw a new housing unit, we immediately thought there were new people. The maturation of the baby boom generation is creating a demand for housing and local government services. Housing brings with it issues of land use.

Once you have young people working and housed, they want and/or need to be mobile. This raises transportation issues. We know that in Minnesota the average household has 1.5 passenger autos. If that should continue, it means we are looking at many more passenger automobiles. Transportation is a good illustration of an area we need to think about, even though we may have thought we had those issues fully settled.

Another aspect of population and its characteristics that's very troublesome to us is anti-social behavior. Some people have put forth the notion that after 1980, once we no longer have so many teenagers, crime is going to evaporate. It's such a nice thought that we're lulled into thinking it might be possible. Yet, if we look at the arrest patterns of the adults in Minnesota, we know that if that population which is now juvenile is arrested as often when it's adult as is the current adult population, we're going to have very busy police. Crime is not going to be an issue that goes away. The reasons for arrest may change, but the number and our concerns might not, especially in terms of violent crime. Violent crimes are not primarily committed by juveniles, but by adults.

Income is another important population characteristic. Family income has risen in Minnesota and is now higher than the national family income. In most counties family income has increased, especially in many of the rural areas where agriculture is dominant. That is especially true in northwestern Minnesota.

Changing age structure pertains very definitely to rural farm population. The average farmer is a middle-aged man. We know that rural areas will have to have more young people because we don't anticipate people farming at age 70 or 80. How that transition is made and with what ease young people enter agriculture are still open questions.

We are no longer in a period of time of talking about decline in rural population, but of stability and actual growth. But we shouldn't kid ourselves into thinking that once we don't have to bemoan decline that there are absolutely no issues. The issues of stability or growth may be as thorny or thornier than were the issues of decline.

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"We [Americans] think bigger is better and we're not apt to look for small scale solutions. In the underdeveloped world where land and capital are scarce, commodities and labor abundant, small farms are more efficient. Because we perceive ourselves as being so successful, we have the arrogance to think we know all the answers, forgetting that the Mexican farmer with four acres of land and a hoe may have something to tell us."

Cynthia Cone, Anthropologist, Hamline University, St. Paul, Mini-Conference Speaker.
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Pollution:

Who Is Responsible?

Who Should Control?

George Bagley
President
Nat'l. Assoc. of Conservation Dist.
St. Joseph, Louisiana*

I do not propose to argue or document the existence of our pollution problems. Neither do I intend to quarrel with the need to do something about them. The only alternatives to the course of action I'm proposing here today, it seems to me, are both unacceptable. One alternative would be to soften down the whole pollution control effort and finally just cast it aside. The other alternative would be to resort to massive regulation involving the use of permits here, there and everywhere. Further, one has to be fearful that one more nationwide regulatory system will only lead the way to even still more regulation. I strongly believe regulations must be reserved for the final fraction, possibly the five per cent of the recalcitrants who simply have no respect or will not respond to social restraints. I feel that within ten years pollution and pollutors will be in the small minority.

I have five basic points to make on how we may approach the pollution issue. First, I believe we will adopt a more realistic timetable for the accomplishment of our pollution control goals. It's time to take our hands off the panic button. We're dealing with an enormously complex set of technological, social, political and economic problems that have originated and grown over a long period of time. In a democracy such as ours where no dictator can command immediate obedience, we cannot expect a whole nation to "about face" and reverse the accumulated practices of 200 years in less than 20. Moreover, while we can understand the indications toward worthwhile goals, it is self-defeating to adopt rash and impetuous schedules of accomplishment. It would be a tragedy in terms of our long-term interests as a people if we try to do too much, too soon and thereby lose our resolve and our endurance before the job is done.

While I object to the term "crisis" as a description of pollution, I do not in any way want to downgrade the importance of the problem. Pollution control is going to demand our everlasting vigilance. I'd like to quote from a letter written not long ago by John Quarles, Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency: "We are all now wiser but sadder as to the ability to solve national pollution problems quickly. It is now evident that the work of cleaning up pollution would require intensive efforts throughout the next 10 or 15 years and that many important environmental goals will not be reached any sooner than that. Passing a law does not by itself solve a problem. Manpower, money and, in some cases, technical advances must also be provided. Experience leads me to conclude that in a national program tackling complex problems the achievement of results takes patience as well as persistence. The risk this creates is that if the intensity of effort weakens along the way, some of the goals may never be achieved."

Second, I believe we're going to place increasingly greater emphasis on public education, understanding and participation in the planning and implementation of pollution control programs. Since most pollution is man-made and since most of it originates on private

This is an edited, condensed version of George Bagley's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.

property, we come immediately to the issue of government regulation as contrasted with voluntary compliance in the control of it. Let me again quote John Quarles: "One lesson we have learned is that in the long run, the only solid foundation on which environmental programs can be based is public education and a high measure of voluntary compliance." I remain convinced that an aggressive enforcement effort by the Environmental Protection Agency is indispensable to full success in carrying out regulations, but it is also true that the strict requirements are impossible to apply on a basis of ramming them down everyone's throat. In some instances our long-term effectiveness has been hurt because, under the pressure of statutory deadlines, we have not allowed time for public education to precede legal enforcement. We must work harder to explain our requirements and seek voluntary support for them, resorting to the club of enforcement only in the exceptional cases where the quest for cooperation has proved fruitless. This doesn't mean that society should be held powerless to deal by regulation and enforcement with those who obstinately choose a course of non-cooperation and by their actions or nonaction inflict damage on the neighbors or the public in general. There must always be authority to cope with those who persist with destruction against the public good.

Third, I believe we as a people are going to recognize that human beings are inseparably a part of Mother Earth and will act accordingly. We humans are not separate or distinct from the earth around us, nor are we adversaries. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, all of us are here only because we are of the earth, by the earth and for the earth. From my point of view we should move forward with whatever is creative, civilized and productive. By the same token, we are the decision makers who must exercise the responsibility to resist and prevent such ugly, shameful and unproductive corruptions as pollution, erosion and disease. Dr. Rene Dubos, distinguished scientist and Pulitzer Prize winner, has said, "We certainly must reject the attitude which asserts that man is the only value of importance and that the rest of nature can be sacrificed to his welfare and to his whims, but we cannot escape an attitude which puts man at the summit of creation while still a part of it."

Fourth, I believe we're going to increasingly recognize the individuality of each place as a basis for pollution control, a place to begin. Each farm and community, each homesite and factory, each county and watershed is unique within itself. Each is marked by social, biological and historical influences that set it apart or at least make it distinctive from the others. What is the potential of the place for various new or continued uses or for a beneficial change in character? Has Mother Earth been abused or well treated? In a democracy and especially in a situation where we are working to achieve nationwide action and national goals largely through voluntary cooperation, all these factors have a highly important bearing on the quality, timing, the difficulty and the breadth of our programs. Property owners tend to be independent souls even in times of economic depression. Within five years after the start of the erosion control program in the early 1930's, national leaders became acutely aware that the goals could never be reached by demonstrative efforts of government alone. Property owners were slow to accept new conservation methods and new concepts even though the government was offering free aid from the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Works Progress Administration and the CCC. The trouble with the original program was that it did not provide adequately for understanding, decision-making, and exercise of responsibility and participation by farmers and landowners themselves. Fortunately, they developed the enactment of Soil Conservation District laws in all of the respective states and subsequently the formation of nearly 3000 individual conservation districts by the property owners themselves.

Today we have over two million property owners cooperating voluntarily in soil and water conservation programs that are thoroughly local in origin and implementation. They are not only tailor-made for each district, but for each part of the district, and their accomplishments grow annually. The second lesson is that there is no single or simple set of erosion control measures that can be applied everywhere and be successful. I am personally convinced that we have no better starting place than the lessons that we have learned with the erosion control program practices by the districts in the last 35 to 40 years. There is no need to re-invent the wheel.

Fifth, I believe we're going to conquer 95% of manmade pollution within the next 30 to 40 years without destroying by excessive regulation either the character of our society or the freedom of its individual citizens. I'm convinced that most Americans don't like pollution and are determined to get rid of it. It's expensive and unhealthy and interferes with people's pleasure. On this continent we've vastly improved man's lot since the days of the early settlements on the Atlantic coast. I'm not speaking of material gains alone. On the whole we have more "plus" than "minus" marks. We slaughtered the buffalo but we've developed some of the finest herds of dairy and beef cattle to be found anywhere in the world. We slashed huge tracks of native forests but we have now put together a system of national and industrial and private forest that challenges the best anywhere in the world. We ruined the original productivity of millions of acres by excessive cultivation and erosion, but by a combination of research, conservation and love for the earth we've also created the largest single area of productive land anywhere on the planet.

We've safely transformed millions of acres of forest and tough prairie grasses into fertile farms which every year produce an incredible variety and an abundance of crops. All of these things represent the new wealth which has helped make possible not only schools, churches and hospitals and all the other institutions of civilized society, but also the advancement of the professions and the arts, including law, medicine and music.

We did it, not because we were ordered to do it by the government, not because of a set of regulations that they required, and certainly not because everybody was looking for a quick profit. We did it because we were free men, owners of our own property, proud of our own accomplishments, proud of the places we live, and because we wanted to pass along to our children something better than we started with. These forces which sprang from the very souls of men are still with us in this country and will continue to be. These are the forces which, unless we allow governmental intervention to supersede our own spirit of creative intervention, will motivate our joint actions and determination to clean up the plague of pollution and make this a better world in which to live.

"Progress can no longer be measured by the degree to which we can manipulate nature to serve our own selfish ends, but will in the future be measured by the degree to which we are able to nurture nature's creative ability."

Phil Weiler, Pastor, Presbyterian Church, Crookston.

"We have to reflect ethically and morally on the priorities that, particularly in our culture, we have given to competition over cooperation."

Gerald Potter, Chairman, Religious Studies, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

"The major problem facing us and the country right now is how can we, on one hand, learn to manage our society and environment on a large scale as a system, making sure we don't create problems now and in the future by our present solutions. . .but, on the other hand, protect individual freedoms, local control and management, local interests, individual entrepreneurship."

Luther Gerlach, Anthropologist, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Mini-conference speaker.

"The media does disservice to the poor. It makes the situation look so hopeless that the response of the rich countries is to throw in the towel and save their food and aid for themselves."

Cynthia Cone, Anthropologist, Hamline University, St. Paul. Mini-Conference Speaker.

Day 3

Education and Economics

Future Perspectives

Bob Bergland
Minnesota's 7th District
U.S. Representative*

During these last 40 years the U.S. has, for the most part, been preoccupied with what to do with excess capacity on the farms in this country. We've undergone a revolution. We've seen our yields increase dramatically. We've seen mechanization move in and people move out. During these last 40 years the governmental policy has dealt with this problem of surpluses. So we've had Soil Bank, crop controls, diverted acres and devices of one kind or another all designed to do the same thing--limit the output on the Ameican farms because there was no place to put the grain at home or anywhere else.

Times have changed. In these last four or five years we've about reached a balance between the world's population and ability to feed itself. Next year Congress will be concerned with devising a new farm policy. I predict that the kinds of things that we will likely do next year will be as profound and as important as the New Deal. The New Deal ushered in an era of government involvement dealing with the question of surpluses into a day in which we are principally concerned with what government can do to insure that we have enough to feed ourselves and a world that's growing at the rate of 275,000 a day.

There's no way the U.S. can feed the world. It's impossible. The question is what can the U.S. do in a world that's growing at such a pace? There are no new continents to be discovered. With a few minor exceptions, there are no more new lands to be opened up. For the most part the food needs will be met by changing diets and increased yields. And so next year the question will be what can the U.S. do to help meet this growing demand in the world? Coupled with that is a problem, the dimensions of which are yet to be appreciated. We have devised a system of agriculture in this country in which we take great pride. We describe it as the envy of the world. In many ways it is. It's the most advanced, sophisticated agriculture that can be found anywhere, but it takes about 10 to 12 petroleum calories to produce a food calorie the American way. By contrast the Chinese produce a food calorie with two petroleum calories. If we could assume that petroleum would be available to the American system in perpetuity, we could say that we could simply improve upon our system and all would be well, but you and I know that that is not true. There is a finite supply of oil in this world. There's a limited supply of natural gas. All fossil fuels are in limited supply. Now we don't know when the crunch will come. Some say 50 years, some say it will go as along as 200 years. Maybe so, give it 300 years. We don't think that we should be the generation who, through a benign neglect, allowed civilization to expire in the predictable future, but rather we need to undertake some fundamental changes in our own lifestyle and our own economy to conserve and to reserve to food production those fuels which we now burn to heat houses and run cars. That is not an easy thing for any of us to accept because we've grown accustomed to having so much, so easily gained, that we tend to take things for granted.

**At the printing of this publication, Bob Bergland has been appointed to the position of United States Secretary of Agriculture. This is an edited, condensed version of Representative Bergland's presentation. Audio recordings of complete Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.*

Thoughful people are gathering across this U.S. to examine our past, because we need to look at the place from which we've come. If we don't know where we've been, how can we tell where we are or where we're going? So we need to examine the past, and in this bicentennial year it's certainly appropriate. And I think much good comes from that because most of us have had quite a lot come to us very easily. We tend to take things for granted. We tend to assume that somehow it was a birthright. By reading of our history and of our forebearers, of those who live in places other than our own, we can appreciate what we have here. We need to do that lest we'll be a restless lot with no roots, no values, no morals, no principles.

Those of us in the Congress are tired. Those of you who vote for people like me are tired. People in positions of authority in administration are tired of the endless hassle, tired of the flim-flam that's come in political life, tired of the plastic world that we've constructed that somehow doesn't ring true; but, not so tired to quit, though, but rather awakening to a new day. We'd better go back to basics and put men and women in positions of authority in trust. We are willing to understand and appreciate the simple sciences--that happiness is not for sale, that you don't need to make a lot of money in order to find peace of mind. So conferences like this can be of great importance to people like me and to U.S. senators, Presidents of the U.S., members of the legislature, your county commissioners, your mayor, the Regional Planning Commission, and to others who hold positions of authority. We need to know what you think. We need to get your good ideas. Yes, we have access to computers in Washington and we have access to historians and economists and planners and professionals, but all of that is for nothing if it doesn't eminate from back here, out home, because you and I are the ones who are going to live with these things that we do and it had better be our creature. And so in a sense we're all pioneers differing in ages and varying backgrounds and experiences, but we'll be building a new order, a new world that's confronted with new problems, the likes of which we've never seen.

Representative Bergland made the following remarks during a question and answer session.

Question: Can you think of two or three items that might be the basis for debate as we develop new farm policies in the Congress?

Bergland: The two that come to mind that will be of paramount importance will be 1) what can the U.S. do to stimulate food production at home and abroad on a continuing basis, and 2) what role should government play in this regard. The amount of rainfall in Russia will affect the price of wheat in Crookston, Minnesota. The economic policies of the government of Japan will have a profound effect on the price of sunflower oil in Crookston, Minnesota. This is the kind of world in which we live. Factors in weather and economic conditions beyond the control of any person in the U.S. will affect our future. So there will be a variety of proposals. The one which troubles me the most is in the absence of some rather firm direction on the part of government. We're going to see our prices whipsawed--go out of sight like when we had $10 soybeans which caused enormous difficulties in many parts of the world. On the other hand, if we should have a good crop in the U.S. and have a good crop in the Soviet Union for a year, maybe two years, we could have Depression prices here. That would have a devastating impact on our own economy, not just the agricultural economy, but on the general economic conditions as a whole. So this member of Congress will be arguing for some predictability and some stability. There'll be many in Congress who won't agree with that. They'll just say let the chips fall where they may. I say that's a dangerous game, but that'll be the fundamental argument next year.

Question: Escalating land prices and high cost of farm implements have led to fewer farms and larger farms. Would you comment on this issue?

Bergland: The plight of the small or family farm is not necessarily related exclusively to prices on farm commodities. I know some big farms in this valley and when the price of wheat goes to $5 a bushel, these big farms get rich and they don't buy up all the land, they just buy up everything next to them. When prices are poor, the small one gets squeezed out first. They have no resources, no depth with which to stand that kind of shock. My personal view is that stability and an element of predictability will do more for the small farm and the small communities than anything else.

Question: You say that the fossil fuels are faltering. What would you offer to take their place, horses or uranium?

Bergland: Neither, likely the sun in due time. All the fossil fuels we had came from the sun. They're all the product of vegetation. I've appropriated $10 of your tax money to further research and development in solar power. It'll be 20 years before we have any important energy derived directly from the sun, but it's coming. We are building a space laboratory that will construct a generator at 25,000 miles altitude. It will have on board solar panels which will pick up radio activity directly from the sun and convert that to electricity. It will then send it to the earth by microwave following a lazar beam that is picked up on earth in a space power station and converted to electricity and distributed. We have many variations of this, but the fact is that we're spending an enormous lot of money now on solar power which in due time will heat all our houses and will provide us with all our stationary power sources. That means that we can run our cars and tractors on electricity with an antenna. We can save natural gas to make nitrogen fertilizer. Now this means tremendous change and it means a substantial change in our economic well-being. The major oil companies aren't a bit interested in solar power, not a bit, because they can't buy and sell the sun. There's no profit in that. Utility companies are interested. Hardware manufacturers are interested. And so we're putting

a lot of government money in to develop this. When it's developed, it will take the burden off coal and gas. The question is not whether it should be done, but how soon can it be done? I think the sooner the better.

Area residents at Mini-Conference session.

"Our discussion group's conclusion was that we must learn to conserve rather than consume. It was mentioned in our group that in many areas, family outings are spent in shopping centers."

Tom Reiver, Waubun, Minnesota, Mini-Conference Discussion Group Reporter.

"Regionalism is here to stay. It is necessary condition, but it must be thought of as an experimental model subject to considerable modification over the next several years."

Dr. George Donohue, Sociologist, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Educational Futures: Their Significance for Rural America

Dr. Harold Shane
University Professor of Education
College of Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana*

I would like to talk about why I'm optimistic about the future and to share with you the probable nature of tomorrow's world as seen by some 200 persons I've interviewed and worked with in the last five or six years. I asked these persons three questions: 1) What do you see as you look down the pike for the next 20 or 25 years as the probable developments that will most profoundly affect our lives? 2) What are some of the educational changes and challenges that we ought to look at carefully during this period? 3) Are the old guidelines, some 50 years old now, the seven cardinal principles of education--worthy home leadership, use of leisure time, civic education, ethical character, etc.--still valid? If they are still valid, what do they mean today after 60 years?

I've become considerably more optimistic than I was two or three years ago after my first contacts with futurists about the future of our country and rural America. I had felt that we had severe problems and I think we still have them, but I think that we can whip them with regard to resource depletion, pollution, etc. In the last year or so I have switched from what you might call a neo-Malthusianist, the ones worrying very badly about population explosions, to the side of the "cornucopians," those who feel that we do have the means to create a wonderful, humane 21st century if we have the guts, integrity, and judgment to do it.

I'd like to start off with five or six reasons why I'm optimistic about the next 20 years or so. Despite our concern about depletion in various forms, we have enormous resources remaining. Despite the fact that there were gloomy predictions as far back as 111 years ago about our running out of coal in the U.S., current estimates suggest that we have more energy locked into the bosom of the country than all of the energy underneath the sands of the various Arabian nations. It's a matter of how to use this wisely. I heartily agree with Mr. Bergland that we've got to put a lot of energy into new sources of energy.

A second reason I'm rather optimistic is because of something David Rockefeller said during a recent conversation. He told me he could not go along with the Club of Rome people who wanted to limit growth. He said that human beings always defied the normal curve and it's an insult to our intelligence to assume that if we're polluting our world, consuming goods and over-breeding, that we're going to continue to do so the point of destruction. We have always had enough wit and wisdom to recoup.

It's also my personal feeling that the rising level of consciousness in the United States as reflected in the last 25 to 30 years is very promising. The improved status of woman, the way in which the rights of children have improved, the way in which many of my black

**This is an edited, condensed version of Dr. Shane's presentation. Supplemental material has been added by Dr. Shane following the original presentation and editing of audio tapes. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101*

friends are far better off than they were 10 or 15 years ago, the impact of the environmentalists, all suggest that the movements we need to push and start as we move into the next year are well on their way. Our science and social inventiveness are tremendous. In the last 50 years you have the development of radar, heart transplants, moon landings, on-site Martian photographs and the enormous miracle of American agriculture. I feel that we have just begun to tap human potential, and that we will learn through schooling and various kinds of wholesome behavior modification, ways in which we can tap human potential as never before.

Finally, we've done a marvelous job over the past 20 years or so in easing world tensions. We've come far from the days of gunboat diplomacy.

Let me turn now to the probable world of tomorrow as these gentlemen and ladies that I've been interviewing saw it. Almost without exception, the personnel in a group of 50, as well as the futurists interviewed somewhat earlier, felt that we were at and were crossing the threshold of an enormous "system break." A system break in a sense that what once operated and functioned was going to change drastically. A second point that came out very strongly was the fact that we are trapped, or perhaps benefiting by, depending on how you look at it, global interdependence. I like the phrase that Barbara Ward used. She said we need to start to develop "dynamic reciprocity." We're not so much independent as we are in the position of trying to see what we can do to satisfy mutual needs. Today, more than ever before because of universal telecommunications, anybody's problems are everybody's problems.

What specific things can we expect tomorrow? A real moral problem now is, according to Daniel Bell of Columbia University, that people expect "entitlements." One of our challenges socially in this mix I'm describing is to cope with the matter of unearned rights on the part of persons who are not productive. I can't emphasize too much the need for productiveness in our own economy. We have great resources but in the last analysis as Ralph Tyler, whom many of you in education know, puts it, "We have become a great nation because of our productiveness, not just because of our resources." There are other places that have resources that are still sitting on them. In this period ahead we have to not only become more productive but also to figure out what to do about persons who feel they have an unearned right to the earth's goods.

I'm afraid that we can expect material shortages because there are finite limits to our resources, but we'll also find substitute materials and learn to recycle our resources. The drama that is being played on the resource stage was clearly called to my attention by Lester Brown, author of *World Without Borders* and *In the Human Interest*. Brown made a point using Bureau of Labor statistics. He said that we are dependent for seven of our 13 basic imports--iron, coal, steel, cadmium, etc.--and that we will be dependent for 11 out of 13 to the 50% level or above by 1985 unless unexpected deposits are found in our own country. It follows that we do need the mutual reciprocity of which I spoke a moment ago.

Among the problems that concern me most is the concern a number of people expressed about threats to freedom in the next decade or two. We have enormous promise from welfare provisions--welfare policies which I am not badmouthing; they have helped persons in real need. But as we look at the promise of social welfare, we have to be aware of the danger of moving more and more into a world of regulated freedom. One hears today that we need to develop a strong foundation under public health programs. Wilbur Cohen, who worked very hard on Social Security legislation, pointed out to me that in his opinion we would have guaranteed employment, wages, and medical care during this 20-year period that lies ahead of us.

If such is the case, then one of the problems is if you have guaranteed employment, who decides who works and who does what? The matter of integrity in moving toward regulated freedom will challenge us a great deal because if we're not rather astute, we could find ourselves losing many of the values that have been traditionally American. Greater group morality, perhaps, is the answer, but there are always persons who need to be disciplined as we try to apply group morality. This puts you in the position also of exercising mutual coersion. All of these mean that traditional "rights," expectations that many Americans have, must be re-thought.

I believe in tomorrow's world we would have an enormous problem with the demands to end the "upstairs and downstairs" quality between the have and the have-not countries. Countries overseas have a damaging kind of claim against us, pointing out that overconsumption in developed nations has put them in the spot that they're in. I would personally reject this, but I have great compassion for what life is like in most parts of the world. I would like to take an example from Robert Heilbroner who very dramatically indicated what some two billion of our fellow humans are up against. If we took an American family earning $8,000 or $10,000 and turned them into a Third, Fourth or Fifth World family, some of them living on as little as $200 to $300 cash income, here's what would happen.

First we would take all the furniture out of the house except a few old blankets, a kitchen table and one chair. We would take away all the clothing except the oldest dress and one suit or other type of clothing for each member of the family, and one pair of shoes for the head

of the family. We would empty the pantry and the refrigerator except for a small bag of flour, some sugar, some moldy bread, and then we would take out the refrigerator. We would dismantel the bathroom, shut off the water, remove the electric wiring.Next we would take away the house, too, substitute the tool shed, and then surround the tool shed with shanties just like it as far as the eye can reach.

In this shanty town there might be one centrally located television set for persons to gather around, but no newspapers because no one can read anyway. There would be no clinic, no hospital, only a midwife; no bank books, a cash hoard of $5, three tenant acres to farm, a cash income of $300, with $100 going to the landlord and $100 to the person who loaned you the money for seed, etc. This kind of situation is exacerbated by the fact that you have to knock off about 40 years of the life expectancies of these people.

Our tough challenge in the world of tomorrow, internationally, is how to reconcile our life style without impossible sacrifices and also to find ways in which the productiveness and the upward mobility of many persons can be brought from this extremely grinding level of poverty. We also have the prospect, I'm sorry to say, of continuing hunger at least for another decade. Our shortage of fertilizers, drought in Europe, long-range forecasts suggesting adverse climatic conditions and population growths, are going to make this inevitable.

My last point on the shape of tomorrow is the matter of our financial picture. We have begun to move into a very tight bind in terms of money. Wilbur Cohen, whom I mentioned before, a former Assistant Secretary in Health, Education and Welfare during some of the development of Social Security legislation, pointed out that we need to rethink the funding of this important benefit to the American people. I'm not remotely suggesting that we will be caught with any collapse of Social Security. The fact remains that we hadn't foreseen and future-planned when that legislation was begun what would happen. There were perhaps seven workers for every recipient for Social Security originally. In 1974 it was estimated to be 3.4 workers for every recipient. In 1985 it probably will be two workers for every recipient of a pension. You can't carry this trend on to the absurd point where there'll be no workers and all recipients, but one can recognize that the problem will become an acute one in about 15 years. Furthermore, in the late '40's we had a fantastic increase in the number of babies born. We can expect in the next several years a progression in the median age of people in the United States from around 26 to 34 years of age. These people will be forming families, spending money, earning wages, and we've got a hopeful period of influx of funds. But when these people approach the year 2000, there'll be relatively few people to contribute to the salary withholdings on which Social Security depends. One of our most demanding jobs is to figure out how to whip this problem in about five or ten years in terms of long-range planning.

To conclude my image of tomorrow, let me take a notable Minnesotan, an economic advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, Walter Heller. Walter (a one-time high school classmate of mine) and I tried to sketch what the economy might look like in the early years of the 21st century. We concluded that probably the growth cone that we've lived through for the last 150 or 200 years could not go on to infinity. Sometime in the next 20 years we need to move toward a greater balance between what we took out and what we restored from the environment. This would probably represent a "stable state" economy. After that, maybe in the early years of the next century, we would have a period of what we decided to call dynamic contraction, in which our use of resources contracted or "pulled in" a bit. This does not means so much doing "without" as it does doing more with less. A prize example of what I mean is the way in which we have skillfully managed with out Telestar satellite to make one tenth of a ton of copper to do the work of 75,000 tons of copper in transoceanic cables.

By dynamic contraction, then, we mean the contracting of our extravagant uses of resources and, hopefully, by 2020 moving into another stage which we might call dynamic equilibrium--a stage in which the world's peoples and its resources are indefinitely in balance. Then, perhaps by 2050, we could reverse the process a little bit so that we return to the most abundant life we've ever had. I hope that this will happen.

The significance of the future for rural America is very close to the significance of the future for *everybody*. There is no rural America in one sense anymore. Sure, there's the agricultural business as distinct from the steel business, but most Americans talk and think alike. I think we have about eight or nine very important educationally significant decisions to make between now and let's say the year 1995. One of these decisions is how we can improve our present naive use of technology. We cannot go on indefinitely expanding, so we have some choices.

We can obviously go on until we collapse through the total use of our energy, or we can have a sophisticated evolution, very carefully doing what we can to turn off the machines that are not in use, being careful to weigh what we try to innovate or improve in our life, not only because of its contribution to our life but also because of what it doesn't take out of the biosphere, and eventually we can move toward the sophisticated balance that I was suggesting. How we do this is a really tough problem, and in rural America, so dependent upon machinery, it's a very important one.

The second decision, implicit in my description of the world, is what our final policies will be in dealing with the human subsets, beginning in our own country and extending beyond. By human subsets I mean young children, aged, ethnics, the whole spectrum of special groups--and we *all* belong to one or more "special groups." Here we have not only our own problem but, eventually, what to do about the have and have-not world.

It seems to me that a big task is to distinguish between equity and equality. Equality to me means treating everyone alike. In the last 10 or 15 years the concept of treating people differently in order to do justice is more common. Professionals in education know I'm referring obliquely to compensatory education. One of our questions, then, is how we can develop in our own country respect for various subsets without Balkanizing the country by having many people with many voices, each group trying to find what's best for themselves.

The third decision we must make is, in view of power and resource alignments, how will we approach the problems that face us at the transnational level? In some three or four years I've traveled overseas in Asia and on all continents except Australia; I've had a number of contacts with persons in power positions in their own countries. I recognize that one of the tests of our maturity is to adapt ourselves to the differing mentalities of persons in other countries. Let me give you an illustration. In a country which 'I'll leave nameless, I was talking with the Minister of Education. He was discussing with me improving the curriculum in his country, democratizing education in the schools, and so on. Then he asked me if I'd like some tea or coffee. I said, "Yes," so he clapped his hands by way of requesting tea or coffee. Inside of 30 or 40 seconds a bearer came into the room with the tea or coffee which apparently had been waiting outside. This man was obliged to crawl in on his hands and knees to present tea to the Minister of Education, presumably to indicate the respect in which the man must be held. I cringed inwardly during this experience. Here was the man, with whom I had been trying to discuss improving social and democratic conditions in the country, demanding total subservience! The two of us simply were speaking totally different languages. It's not just a matter of our willingness and our efforts to spend energy, but a question of how, with compassion and understanding, we can do it.

Another significant item is what we can do to restore and maintain the integrity of our military, professional, business and other establishments. Most of us have been pretty badly shaken up by disclosures of CIA activities and by Watergate, as well as the less savory activities of Big Labor and certain multi-national corporations.

Last November I had the pleasure of dining with a one-time cabinet member. I asked, "How do you think we can clean up the problems that so deeply distress us?" He came back with three extremely interesting points. One was that we had to get the unwholesome influence of big money out of politics. Second, he said that we've got to do something to control "bullyism." That is, we've got to protect persons from such abuses as when an unscrupulous administrator can order an IRS investigation to embarrass a political rival. Third, we have somehow to do a better job of restoring credibility to the many fine persons who are in office or running for office in the United States. A very interesting point that my friend made at the end of our dialogue was what George Bernard Shaw said about democracy. According to Shaw, "Democracy is a quaint form of political organization to insure that the people get *just* what they deserve." The former cabinet member concluded that "We have got to try to police our ranks so that somebody interested in politics and public office won't be crucified and lose the fine integrity he has by the compromises or deals he has to make in order to obtain support from the electorate." That problem is one which will try our morality very much in the next decade or so.

We also need in rural and in greater America to reach decisions about how to cope with what heretofore has been a great range in privilege. There are persons who have, for example, been able adroitly to avoid paying taxes. There are persons who have, through a whole array of machinations, been able to come off better than most people in regard to pension benefits.

In addition to that, we've got a tough problem of how to cope with the shortcomings and problems of mass media. I become more and more concerned about the way in which our opinions are placed upon us by "them." Dr. L.A. Cremin, the president of Teachers College, Columbia University, for example, was saying that 20 or 30 years ago you had the news that was fit to print on the first page; you also had editorial comment and everybody *knew* it was editorial opinion. Today you have selected news on TV where someone decides what we will see and hear. This is presented with careful editing because programs last for only a half hour. This selected news is followed by the so-called wrap-up where TV viewers are more or less told what to think after they've been subjected to news items often chosen with human bias. This is a delicate problem and one that concerns all Americans.

Among the persons that I interviewed during a recent study was an engineer by the name of Willis Harman at the Stanford Research Institute. I asked how important he thought education would be in these next 20 years. He said, "Education will be of great importance, but

I'm not so sure about schooling. Let me tell you just what I mean," he continued. "The decisions, the problems of the 1970's and '80's are not going to be significantly affected by the kids in school now. So we've got to find ways of extending education to everyone through community colleges, the media, books, etc., to people everywhere because they *all* need to be informed. The schools *alone* can't do the job."

The second interesting point was made by Lester R. Brown, the world food specialist. We were lunching in the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. when Brown said, looking around at the people in the lunch room, "There's probably not a man or woman here who could not give you anywhere from an hour's talk to a semester seminar on pollution, resource depletion, and the like. Yet none of these things were taught in the schools that they went to 20 years ago." And he said, "One of the reasons why I would agree with Harman's point that 'education is vastly important but I'm not so sure of schooling' is that events transpire so fast that your education quickly goes out of date." He went on to say, as I recall, that 70% of the pharmaceutical compounds that are being prescribed today didn't even exist 25 or 30 years ago. Just as pharmacologists need constantly to be "retreaded," so all the rest of us have to constantly be re-educated.

These men, as I understood them, were saying that schools were losing their monopoly of the '30's, '40's and '50's to other agencies, and that the burden of educating the biased, the uninformed, and the many adults who needed to be reached, would be something that many agencies, including shcools, must share. I see education becoming of even greater importance in these next 20 years, but we must not assume that it will be the traditional education it has been. Dr. Cremin has speculated that by 1985 or 1995 we may want to have 50% of our education budget going into public service television programs and may need to prepare many of our teachers for various kinds of activities that reach learners in life-long learning programs.

Come what may, I think we can count on our educational futures in rural America (and elsewhere) being exciting ones.

"In teaching a futures course to high school juniors and seniors for the past five years, I have seen in these young people a steadily growing awareness that they are responsible citizens of Planet Earth. A growing number of college futurists are disgusted with the 'fun and games' mentality of those middle-aged people whose obsession with physical pleasure relegates concerned, thinking people to the position of 'nobodies.'"

Hjordis Dille, Teacher, Crookston Central High School.

"It is the right of parents primarily to delegate to their hired teachers what they want taught to their children, how they want it taught, and who they want to teach it. The lack of this voice today in our educational system, is, in my mind, one of the reasons for the great confusion in that system."

Ethel Mae Smith, Crookston, Minnesota.

"Education is a mirror of you. We reflect your thinking. Have we been able in education to lead society? No. We're still reflecting the bigotry and hatred of society."

Howard Casmey, Minnesota Commissioner of Education, Mini-Conference Speaker.

"How can education prepare for a future in a society about which we know nothing? We can teach people to think. You teach people to have good judgment and to make decisions, then they're not afraid of the unknown because you can adapt your lifestyle, thinking and morals."

Howard Casmey, Minnesota Commissioner of Education, Mini-Conference Speaker.

Toward a New International and Political Order

Rev. William Ryan
Director, Center of Concern
Washington, D.C.*

I've been in Washington about five years working on the dream of making the world more human. If in this talk I seem at times to be negative or critical of the U.S., remember that I am working in Washington, not in my own country, Canada, and the reason is that I believe very deeply that the future of the whole world is going to be better or worse depending on what happens in this country. I left Canada and many other possibilities to work in your country because I believe in the American dream. I'm a "believing" economist, and that means that I believe in people. It was interesting in the Bucharest meeting on population in 1974 that it was the Chinese who kept insisting that people are not the problem. People are the most precious resource we have. That's my perspective. First of all, *people* are resources, then let's look at the other resources.

It's easy to get tired in the world today. It's too complicated. There's a real danger for the U.S. with the last 10 years of disappointments on the world level to go isolationist in so far as that is possible. I think for the U.S. today the hardest challenge is to accept the whole world and to accept that other people also have good ideas. The temptation is to think we're right; they're stupid, they're wrong. I'm afraid the danger of the media in this country confirms that image. It almost at times comes close to propaganda. I know this particularly of the international meetings on population, food, or aid and trade that take place in other parts of the world. It's very difficult for an American reading the newspaper or listening to the media to know what happened.

The year 1976 marks the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the U.S.A. as a new, bold experience, experiment really, based on the view that all men are created equal. It was a new creation and it was a rejection by restless pioneers of a society of privilege of the old world. The poor and weak learned right away that the system of free enterprise is biased in favor of the strong--of those who have dollars. And it was only through a dynamic strategy of strength, through association, political power and civil responsibility, whether it's through farmers' unions, or trade unions or other types of unions, that gradually the vast majority of people began to share in the dream of equality in a way that few other countries in the world have.

Today the United States, as the rest of the rich world, is faced with a strident demand on the part of the poor and less powerful nations of the world, especially of those gathered in the United Nations, to let go of some of its own privileges. We asked England to let go of some of its privilege 200 years ago. Today the U.S.A. is asked to become a genuine partner in a new international, economic and political order based on the equality of all men and all women in the whole world. What's going to be the response of the rich world, and in particular of the United States, to this demand in today's world?

**This is an edited, condensed version of Fr. Ryan's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN 55101.*

The purpose of my talk is to spell out some of the major developments and implications of this type of world bargaining process that's now under way among the nations of the world. And here again the uncorrected market, so-called free market, doesn't promise any bounty to the poor and the weak. And so, like our forebearers, these countries are resorting to exactly the same processes the weak and poor did in our country. They're resorting to strategies of economic strength and political power as well as to concepts of social responsibility to make us flesh out with them the promises of equality that are enshrined at the charter of the U.N. And they're hoping that the rich countries will heed their call in the name of human dignity, in the name of justice, but also in the name of our own long-term interest.

The world is out of control and perhaps the best image that we can use is that of a super oil tanker. Who's in control of a super oil tanker whether it's in the St. Lawrence River or along the coast of California? It's just a technical monstrosity looking for some place to have a disaster. It isn't technology that's missing. We can make a good ship if we want to. What's lacking is any real sense of world management and political will. The problem is not the resources or the technology as the previous speaker suggested; the problem is us. It really does come down to social organizations, good will, common sense, vision.

Today over a billion people in the world really have no part in the fantastic new wealth that is bursting out each year. These are real people; they're not just statistics. A quarter of the world's people, and soon it could come to a half, is having no new share in the pie even though the pie is growing very fast. Some people say they're lazy. Some people said they came along too late, and that's probably the real story. There's no place to immigrate. The technology is wrong for them. They need jobs. They don't need a great machine that costs $100,000 and gives jobs to a few people. They came along after the world was organized and they have very little say in how it continues. And they came along at a time when resources, their own resources quite often, had been taken away by people like us who needed it for our development. Even in the middle ages the poor were never poor like they're poor today in the sense that they could have been three or four times as poor as the richer people. Today it's in terms of 20 or 30 times poorer than the rich, even inside their own countries.

After World War II the U.S. did take tremendous leadership; they really shaped the world. They put together the world bank, the international monetary fund, and the whole system of trade and power relations which created a new world order. The only trouble is that they've shaped it to their own interests. Over the last 25 or 30 years it's the U.S. dollar and the ability of the U.S. to police the world and guarantee economic and political security that has really been the basis of what's happened. Now suddenly we're beginning to see a new world. In 1971 the whole house of cards that made this euphoric age that we have grown up in began to fall apart. The devaluation of the dollar was probably the single biggest shock since the beginning of World War II. Raw material prices soared. Russia came into our market and bought up grain, and the food shortage became very quickly acute. Food prices tripled just a little before oil prices quadrupled. And the whole beautiful house of cards that supported this tremendous economic development that we had come to think was "normal" collapsed. We find ourselves even today with the world no longer under our control. For the first time the U.S. can't do what it wants economically or politically, which is, of course, the situation for the vast majority of people in the world. But it's new for a rich, powerful country like the U.S. or other rich, powerful countries.

Remember that this tremendous development which we have benefited from in the last 20 years depended primarily on two things. It was cheap oil that made development possible. The Arabs supplied that. The other thing was stable prices of food. It really was the U.S. government, the U.S. farmers that made that possible with the help of price supports and the land bank system. I agree very much with your congressman that until something like that is restored for the whole world, the danger of totally unjustified hunger is grave. So here we are in 1976, a time in which you could say cities are no longer possible. Cities depend on three things--cheap food, cheap fuel, and lots of jobs. And all of these are becoming increasingly scarcer--at least in the short run. That's why the rural area today is very important. Clearly the modern city cannot be the model of the future.

I have had the privilege of being at several of the key international meetings of the U.N. in recent years. I'll tell you the way I see it. Now this is more from a Third World view. It's not an American view. I was in Santiago, Chile, in 1972 for the meeting of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development. Nixon had devalued the dollar, and many of the poor countries lost badly because they had held their reserves in dollars. So these 141 countries wanted some guarantee that they'd have a say on the price of their own money. They had come to realize that they didn't have any say in making the rules of the game. But no progress was made. I think that was a turning point. At that meeting the poor countries said we can no longer trust the good will and generosity of the rich countries. It was at that meeting you began to hear of plans to build cartels on the model of the OPEC countries. Poor countries were going to do the same thing as the trade unions have done in every country--organize their bargaining power.

A few weeks later there was another conference in Stockholm on human environment. People became very aware that something was wrong with the world's environment--even began to worry about people stealing each other's clouds. That would have sounded crazy ten years ago. Now it begins to be possible to fight war by stealing each other's weather. We also were aware that Japanese businessmen were

moving all through Latin America trying to find a country in which they could locate their dirty steel mills so they themselves could have clean air in tiny Japan. We also knew that the fish catch in the world was off, and to whom do the fish belong? Who owns the sea? As you know, the bigger countries are grabbing its riches. These are few examples of the power struggle that is going on in the world.

Later in 1974 the key issue was population. The rich countries' attitude was that there had to be massive birth control in the poor countries. They said the key world problem is population growth. The poor countries turned around and said, the problem is poverty, not population. People don't have fewer children until they have something else besides their poor, unhealthy children. That's all they have. They're not going to have fewer of them until they see some sign that their children are going to live and have some future. In a way it depends on how you look at the world. If you look at the world through the prism of population crisis you see people as problems, and every extra child is a problem. Other people, and more and more people from the poorer countries, look through the prism of the car crisis. They say that the problem is not so much a population explosion; it's a car explosion, much more dangerous for the world because of its voracious appetite for resources. I'm not saying the whole truth is on either side, but remember there are two basically different ways of looking at the present world situation.

Then came the food conference in Rome in which we had to face the fact that three or four hundred, maybe five hundred million people are continually unnourished in our world, which means they can never be fully-developed people. Call them lazy, but just remember they physically don't have the energy we do because they don't eat enough. And besides millions of these people die of starvation each year. It isn't a case of the U.S. suddenly feeding all of those people, but there are possibilities of helping them to produce their own food. The U.S. and Canada are obviously going to make the food policy of the world because we're the only two countries that have food surpluses. The terrible danger is that we will also make food export an issue of control in our foreign policy. I guess the question comes down to whether we are going to treat starvation like a disease; it simply has to be gotten rid of. You don't argue politics on that level. You don't even argue economics. It's simply something you can't tolerate in human society.

So we come down to the real fight that's going on in the world today, the struggle for new economic and political order. What the poor and not-so-poor countries are asking for is a larger piece of the pie, but not only a piece of the pie, but also more important--and that's where we get mixed up at times--they want to be in on the decision making, just as the trade unions do in our country. They don't want somebody to decide for them what their life is about. Now they are asking, "Why is that in getting coffee from the tree to the coffee pot, we get such a little bit?" They say, "We want more say on how the final market price is divided. "Another issue that's very strong here is the question of the multi-national corporation. The poor countries want more control of these giants. The question immediately isn't whether they're good or bad; it's simply they're big, the bigness left uncontrolled is always dangerous.

I guess the struggle in the 1980's is going to be whether we're going to continue to organize the world on what we call the economic growth model or whether the first priority in whatever model we choose--and there can be several--is based on meeting basic human needs. We all know that that's what the economy should do--meet basic human needs--but we know very well, and we have all the most glaring evidence, that the way the world is organized right now isn't geared to meeting basic human rights and basic human needs. The challenge to our education process is whether we can be creative enough to change that.

One of the sad things for many Americans as they travel around the world today is to see that the U.S. is no longer looked to as the world model--the model for people to imitate. As people travel today, they see that two countries tantalize the poorer countries--China and Cuba. Why? Because these people are feeding their poor and they're giving work to their unemployed. They're doing it with very little income. That raises questions about our own country, how we plan and how we run our economy. It's a sad indictment on our world that with five per cent of the present arms budget of the whole world we could satisfy the basic human needs of all the people in the world. In fact, the emperor has no clothes on and we've got to begin to be brave enough to say so loud and clear.

What's at stake is a whole new way of seeing things. It's really sort of giving up your roots to a degree, not disowning them, not in any way blaming the past; that gets you nowhere. Guilt is no way to be creative. We are at this turning point in history in which we can either turn in and hate the world and say, 'We're right and they're wrong," or else we can begin to say, "Gee, there must be a different way of doing things," and begin to be creative. It's a conversion that's both intellectual and emotional. It's a conversion that can also be religious, in which we really say we want to be free enough of the way we're living that we can do something different if we have to. It's very hard to question some of the things we hold dear, but as you look at the whole world today, the basic assumptions on which we run our society are now seriously being questioned. The dream is still right, the vision is right, but the means have to change.

Now does this mean that the U.S. and Canada should just give away everything these other countries demand? Not necessarily. At least we've got to be willing to talk to those people. To do that we've got to believe that maybe they have something, too, to offer us, and that's

already a big, big step forward. That's where the conversion lies. Remember if we ever, ever give up on the worth of even one single person, we have destroyed ourselves, we've destroyed the vision. You really do have to mix with other people, listen to other people, hear them contradicting you, and gradually--at least this is in my own experience and one of the reasons I stay at the work I'm doing--you will find you are hearing from Third World people or Fourth World people a lot of things you have never thought of. Now I find when I hear a narrow nationalist talk, whether Canadian or American, I don't find anything in common with him. I just simply say, "That way lies death." Business-as-usual thinking is certainly going to bring disaster to our world.

I haven't given you any solutions, but I think you can begin to change some of your attitudes and work with other people. There's where education, the greatest education, primarily among adults, has to take place. There's basis for hope because at least all nations are talking to each other today. They're talking of the basic human needs of all people and they're beginning to bargain a little bit about them. But behind it there's another push, and on this quote from Barbara Ward's new book, *Home of Man*, I'll end. She says "Today the scientist and the sage, the man of learning and the poet, the mathematician and the saint, repeat to the human city the same plea and the same warning: we must love each other or we must die." And I'd add, all that's possible because Someone first loved us.

"There's considerable data that suggests that in large families children learn more how to share. . . .You just have to figure out ways to have larger families but with fewer children."

Cynthia Cone, Anthropologist, Hamline University, St. Paul. Mini-Conference Speaker.

"We are going to have to live with less and maybe even with scarcity, but I think it's still a question of quality of life, not the quantity."
Gerald Potter, Chairman, Religious Studies, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

"Why do people starve? We tend to blame today's hunger on the sexual habits of the poor rather than on the consumption of the rich. At this point in time, the problem is not so much that there are too many people, but that some of them are hogging all the food, so to speak."

Cynthia Cone, Anthropologist, Hamline University, St. Paul. Mini-Conference Speaker.

Minnesota Economy

Bruce MacLaury, President
Ninth Federal Reserve Bank
Minneapolis, MN*

As citizens of this state we are obviously concerned about our life, our future, our children's future and all that goes on around us. This conference, I think, is testimony to that fact. I'd like to summarize some of the information that has been presented to us in The Commission on Minnesota's Future about the state in which we live, the people, what they do, how they earn their livings, how well off they are and how well off they are likely to be. I'd like to look at this in three steps: 1)the kinds of forces that are at work in the world that shape our future, our present and our past for us; 2) how we have been shaped as a state by those forces; 3) a brief look at what we might be like in the future and some of the implications of that.

It doesn't take an expert to say that as one of 50 states in this country and as one part of a much larger world, a large part of what we are is determined outside of our own ability to influence it. We are, first and foremost, a group within a nation within a world and cannot isolate ourselves from that broader context. In that sense, it's not suprising that the broad patterns of economic development in the state of Minnesota follow the patterns of the U.S.

If there is one characteristic that I would cite about economic growth and development in the state and the country, it is the element of change. We see changes in production techniques, nowhere more dramatically than in agriculture itself. We see changes in the methods of organization, in the ways we get jobs done. We see new products that simply didn't exist a few years ago.

Looking at Minnesota, we also have to recognize that the ways in which the federal government influences us have been changing--in the forms of its regulations, its transfer payments, and the inducements provided to local communities to fit into the national picture. Our state of Minnesota either prospers or falls behind to the extent that we can benefit from, adapt to, or even profit from the kinds of changes that are going on around us. The ability to adapt not only to the technological changes that have occurred in the agricultural sector but also to the population shifts that have grown out of those technological changes--this indicates an ability on the part of people in this state to see both opportunities and adversity, and to adapt to them.

John Borchert from the University of Minnesota has spelled out to our Commission on Minnesota's Future the idea of entrepreneurship in the corporate sector in this state. He called to our attention that of the Fortune 500, largest industrial firms in the U.S., in 1974, something like 13 of those 500 were based in Minnesota and 12 of those 13 had been started by Minnesotans. That proportion is greater than one would expect, looking at the fact that we have 2% of the population and not that great a degree of wealth. Of the new

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**This is an edited, condensed version of Bruce MacLaury's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.*

manufacturing jobs that were developed in out-state Minnesota between 1947 and 1972, some 70% are attributable to firms started by Minnesotans. We have seen opportunities and we have taken them. We have, in fact, adapted to change. But I don't think all of that means we are captains of our own fate entirely.

Within the framework of national and international forces in which we operate, one can cite three characteristics that help determine the shape of how we make our living in the state of Minnesota: 1) the natural resources of the state--the farm lands, the timberland and the raw materials, the minerals that exist within the state; 2) since we still operate in a profit-oriented economy, we can't ignore the pull of markets where we can sell what we produce and, likewise, where we can get the labor and the other inputs we need to make a product; 3) we can't overlook the impact of federal, state and local governments upon our economic geography in this state.

I emphasize that of these--the natural resources, markets and labor, government--the only one we really have control over is what we can do at the state and local government level. One of the obvious things in that context is the transportation system and particularly the road system within the state of Minnesota. Another institution that makes a real difference in the way the state develops is the state college system, the universities and private colleges as well.

What have those forces produced? Let's look briefly at some of our characteristics as people in Minnesota, how we make our income and what we make in the way of income. It's obvious that we have ben a growing population. Back in 1940 there were less than three million people in the state and today we are very nearly four million people. We have been growing within the state at a slightly slower rate than the nation as a whole, largely because there has been out-migration from this state to other parts of the country. My own impression is that, given what we know about birth rates, we are probably going to be growing in terms of people at a slower rate over the next few years than we have over the last 30 years.

What about our population structure? Despite the radical movement from the rural areas into the urban areas, we in Minnesota are still less urbanized than the nation as a whole. That's not strange as one looks around at the nature of our landscape. In 1970, the last census, something like 57% of the people in this state lived in counties which are described by the census as urbanized. That compared with something like 70% for the nation as a whole.

What about the age of the population? This is important in the context of jobs, markets, etc. Over the last 30 years, the median age of the population in this state has been dropping. That is in the process of reversing itself. We are going to see, with the decline in the birth rate, the movement of younger people into the labor force and fewer young people proportionately coming on. So the median age in the state and country is going to be rising.

What does that mean as far as the economy is concerned? We'll be making fewer baby bottles and producing more geriatric pills, to take the extreme. It means a very substantial shift in housing. As the baby boom of the late 1950's is now moving into the labor force and into the family formation years, the need for a place to live is going to be at a peak over the next few years. We face that against the fact that housing is increasingly expensive in relation to incomes. In the past, with the baby boom of the late 1950's, we had a very large proportion of our population in so-called dependence. They were dependent upon those of us who were working to provide for them. They will now be moving into the work force and will be able to support more easily ("more easily" is the key) those who are coming after them to be educated. The proportion of those in the work force will increase and those dependent (not making incomes) are going to be proportionately less. This has a great deal to do also with public services and their costs.

Just as dramatic as the change in population patterns in the rural areas, based upon agricultural technology, has been the shift in the composition of the work force in this state and the U.S. as a whole. I'm referring to the fact that more women are working. Go back to 1940 and you find that only 20% of adult women were working. If you look at 1970, you find that proportion has doubled: 40% of the women 25 years of age and older are in the work force. If you take the decade 1960-1970 in Minnesota, you find that of new entrants into the labor force, 180,000 were women and 76,000 were men. That has tremendous implications for the state and nation.

Finally, let's look at education. I was surprised at the changes that have taken place in one generation. In 1950, half of the people in this state had only an eighth grade education or less. By 1970, only 30% had no more than an eighth grade education. At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of people in this state with college degrees, meaning four years of college education or more, had doubled from something like 5% of the total population to 11% of the population. This has vast implications for the kinds of jobs that we can expect to have in this state and, perhaps more important, for our ability to adapt to the changing environment around us.

Dealing with occupational structure, the proportion of the work force in the state involved directly in agriculture dropped from

something like 17% back in 1958 to 7% in 1974. The fast-growing sectors in that same period of time were retail trade, wholesale trade, service sectors and government, state and local government in particular. It was partly the baby boom, again, that influenced educational requirements and caused those involved with state and local government to increase in numbers.

Over the past 15 years or so manufacturing jobs in Minnesota have expanded, particularly in the out-state regions. For the U.S. as a whole, in contrast, there has not been a net growth in manufacturing jobs. We are in a so-called post-industrial society; we have moved through the industrial revolution. We are now in an era where we are not working in factories as much as we are in banks, in professions and otherwise providing services to those who already have the physical comforts they need. There are obviously great variations in occupations across the state. The geography of the state partly determines that--with agriculture strong in the west and the south, mining in the northwest, and services in the metropolitan areas.

What about income? Are we well off or are we not? As we can measure it, Minnesota has been below the national average in per capita income until just the last couple of years. We in this state earned about 90% of the national average. We were behind but we have been--even before the agricultural income gains of 1974-75--catching up. Within Minnesota there are very substantial differences in income, determined primarily by the proportion of people in agriculture and the proportion of people in either manufacturing or in service industries. Ten years or even five years ago, incomes outside metropolitan counties were about ¾ of the average for the state, and incomes in the metropolitan counties also leveled out.

A big question is whether or not this is a lasting phenomenon. Can we expect farm incomes to hold anywhere close to the high levels of 1974-75? The cost of inputs has continued to go up and the prices of '74 are no longer with us. I have some feelings that we are vulnerable. Land values have risen dramatically. In fact, we have already capitalized into land values a large part of those incomes that were with us a couple of years ago. How sustainable are they?

Phil Raup from the University of Minnesota has pointed out to The Commission on Minnesota's Future a couple of changes that concern him: 1) A major shift in the nature of agriculture within this state over the last five years has been the expansion in terms of millions of acres, as you know, of harvested crops at the expense of livestock. 2) A very substanital shift in the nature of the crops; three crops that are particularly sensitive to international markets--wheat, soybeans and sugarbeets--jumped from something like 10% of cash receipts in this state in 1968 to something like 25% of cash receipts in 1974. The question is: have we built ourselves a vulnerability to fluctuations in world prices as a result of the shifts that have been made in response to world prices--shifts that can let us down maybe as bumpily as the rise was pleasant?

On this question of income, consider one last point. The 1970 census indicated that one out of ten people in Minnesota lived below the poverty level as it was then defined by the Social Security Administration. Of the approximately 400,000 people whom that represented back in 1970, only one in 12, about 8% of those people below the poverty line were reported as drawing public assistance from the state. That tells me we are still, even if in poverty, a very self-reliant and proud people. Over the last 20 years or so there has been an improvement in the distribution of income. There is now a higher proportion of the population in the state in what can be described as the middle income area. That was true in 1970. It doesn't take into account any of the changes that may have resulted from the rise in agricultural income since 1970.

What are the best kinds of guesses--and I emphasize the word "guess"--about changes we are likely to see over the next 25 years? That's something that all of us want to know. Although those of us on The Commission on Minnesota's Future have been increasingly frustrated in our efforts to get a clear crystal ball, let me share with you some of the ideas that were put before us which make sense to me. The best guesses about life in Minnesota over the next quarter century are: that population growth will not be as rapid in the future as it has been in the past; that we will have a larger labor force, not so much because of population growth but because a higher proportion of the total population is moving (by age group) into the labor force and because a still higher proportion of women will move into the labor force.

The employment structure will have a number of shifts in it. In agriculture and mining, the best guess is that the number of people employed there will be stable. We can guess the following: that there will be some further increase in those employed in manufacturing, particularly in out-state regions; that there will be an increase in state and local government services; that incomes in the state will continue to grow at about the same rate as for the nation as a whole; that the rural economy will continue to diversify and there will be more of a diversification of industry out to the larger towns in rural areas; that urbanization of larger towns will continue. The center cities, whether we're talking about the Twin Cities, Fargo-Moorhead, or a number of others out-state, have not been gaining in population; they have been losing. There has been a spreading of population around those urban areas, and I think that's what we would expect to see continue. I personally question whether we are going to see state and local government continue to grow as it has grown over the last ten years.

Again, these are guesses. Let me read you a quotation about similar projections in the past: "A presidential commission appointed by Herbert Hoover in 1929 later reported to Franklin Roosevelt on how to plot the course through 1952. The report had 13 volumes prepared by 500 researchers. The summary required 1,600 pages and yet there was not one word in it about atomic energy, jet propulsion, antibiotics, transistors or other significant developments. Similarly, Herman Kahn in this major work about the year 2,000 really never mentioned pollution or the environment and there was no real emphasis on the energy shortage." That's a cautionary tale to remember whenever anyone tries to look ahead at what the future holds. Even those guesses make no allowance for wars, famines, technological breakthroughs; they do not make allowance for any resurgence of the birth rate, were that to occur; and they do not contemplate either a new energy crisis or the resolution of the energy crisis.

Barring calamities that we can't see, I think that the future of this state is bright. It's bright primarily because of the people who live in it and the resources that God have us to work with. It's frustrating to me, and perhaps to you, to feel that we can't set out for ourselves some challenge, some major new way to improve the way we live and the environment in which we live. I came as an outsider from New York into this state and now, having lived here five years and having turned down "opportunities" to go back to New York, I think I can tell you that we--you--are very fortunate people. If we can continue to build on the kind of heritage that we have, I think Minnesota is in a good way to being as strong and resilient in the future as I think it has been in the past.

Mini-Conferences attracted citizens from varied interest areas.

Special Issue Sessions

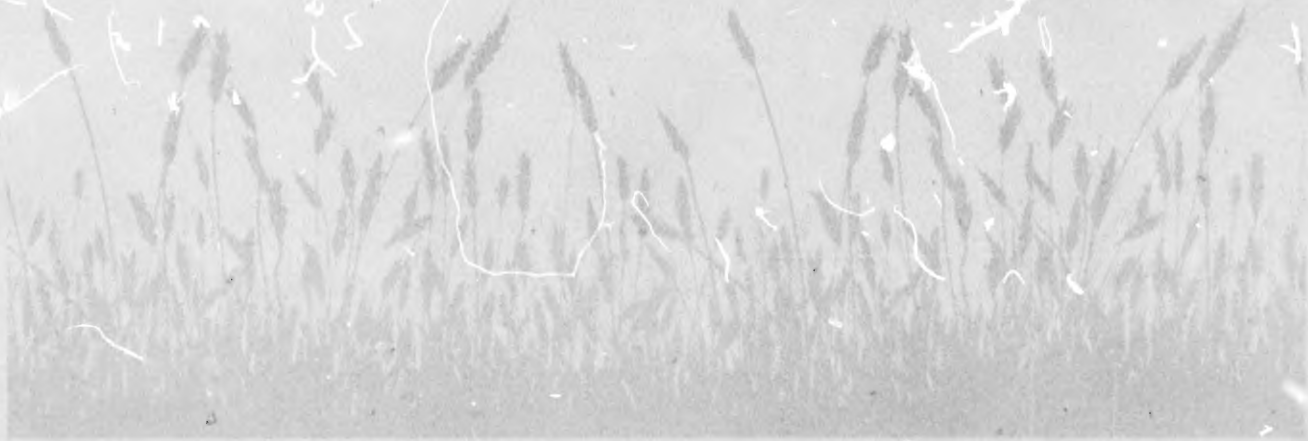
Rural Housing

Energy

Rural Health

Taxation

Myths of Rural America



Rural Housing

Exerpts from the presentation by
JAMES F. DLUGOSCH, Executive Director, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, St. Paul, Minnesota

"One of the truisms that operates -- and it seems so obvious that everybody is afraid to act on it -- is that once a decision is made in the public area and resources are provided to accomplish the public objective, in this case, housing in rural areas, it's amazing the way the private sector responds by trying to participate in public programs and submits applications that are in tune with priorities that were set.

"In the last couple of months, we have put announcements out that we were accepting applications for mortgage loans for multi-family dwellings using Section 8 subsidies. Along with that, the word was generally out that we were giving priority to new applications for outside the metropolitan areas of the state and to housing for families. Lo and behold, about 80% of the applications we got were for family housing and most of it was outside the metropolitan areas. . . .The private sector is capable of responding. That's what our system of government is about--to use government resources to help the private sector to accomplish public objectives."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
ROBERT PEABODY, Housing Developer, East Grand Forks, Minnesota

"I am personally very fearful that through federal, state and local regulations we're making it virtually impossible for people to live in their own house, let alone live in an apartment or something that we call standard today."

". . .I can imagine what it's like for a lot of people when you start talking about rural Minnesota and rural housing needs in America on a Washington, D.C. level. Our problem, I think, consists of two things: 1) We have to have more influence on our legislators that are passing the laws that are putting us 'behind the right ball' on progress. 2) We have to have more interest on the part of the people in the community to find out what these programs are and what good they do for the community."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
ALLEN WANQUIST, Rural Housing Chief, USDA, Farmers Home Administration, St. Paul, Minnesota.

"I'd like to say a bit about the Farmers Home Administration Section 502 Loan (Single Family Home Ownership Loan). We have six eligibility requirements: 1) need for housing, 2) inability to get other credit, 3) present a moderate income loan earnings maximum -- that's $12,900, but it's getting outdated now, 4) repayment ability -- and we have two crutches for repayment ability; one is interest credit and the other, a co-signer, 5) you must build or buy in a rural area. 6) you must build or buy an adequate but modest house. This is an 8½%, 33-year loan."

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Thomas Feeney, Area Director of Housing and Urban Development, St. Paul, Minnesota, also presented information to the Conference. We regret that because of difficulties with audio tapes, Mr. Feeney's comments are not available.

Energy

Exerpts from the presentation by
DON IMSLAND, Northern State Power, Minneapolis: "Energy Futures"

"I have tried to identify some of the alternative ways that we can think about our energy future. . . .

"The first is the possibility of a major break-through--like in fusion or solar power or something else. . . .

"The second pattern of thinking is represented in the book by Robert Heilbroner which raises the question: is there hope for man? The thing that he expresses, that may be a pattern, is the shift in balance in terms of political power and economic power between rich and poor nations. He thinks that within the next 30 years there will be a kind of equalization of rich and poor nations in terms of economic, political, military power. . . .

"The third pattern is presented in the little book *Small Is Beautiful* by E. F. Schumacher. His thesis is captured in the term 'intermediate technology.' It's not the high technology of the West and it's not the low technology of the very poor nations, but it's a technology that's kind of in-between -- and it consumes a great deal of human labor. China is probably the best example of intermediate technology. . . ."

"The fourth pattern is represented by the name Herman Kahn, a famous futurist. His pattern of thinking about energy in the future is that the world is in a tremendous state of growth. . . .He says, for example, that today with four billion people we have a gross world product of about $5.5 trillion. Now, he predicts that within the lifetime of today's adolescents, we're going to have a world population of between 15 and 30 billion people and that the gross world product would average between $100 and $350 trillion. . . .

"The fifth pattern--and this one is the most conservative and, I think, the most realistic--is 'business as usual,' but not quite as usual. . . There won't be any major energy crisis--maybe some small problems. There won't be a major economic crisis, no big depression; there will be less driving, smaller families, some so-called minor things like that. But essentially what we'll have in the next two decades is an extension of what we have right now. The only long-term change is a slight decrease in economic growth and, therefore, a decrease -- I'm not sure how slight -- in energy demand."

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Roger Moe, Minnesota State Senator, District 2: "Peat in Minnesota"

[*Because of technical problems, Senator Moe's presentation was not recorded. Senator Moe has submitted this summary of his speech.*]

Senator Roger Moe spent his portion of the energy workshop synthesizing the research for the potential of alternative energy development.

Senator Moe pointed out that energy use in Minnesota now exceeds our energy sources -- a situation that is now a national trend. Because of this, it is important that alternatives to conventional energy sources -- petroleum, coal, natural gas -- be developed. One excellent potential energy source in Minnesota is peat. Contrary to common belief, Moe said, our state need not be totally energy dependent. In fact, the 7.5 million acres of peat located in Minnesota is a major source of potential energy and a potential economic boon to the state. He said our state holds the vast majority of peat in the United States and that if developed in an environmentally sound manner, it is possible in the future to supply our citizens with a plentiful clean and environmentally safe source of energy.

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Exerpts from the presentation by
JOHN D. PETERSON, Director of Conservation and Planning, Minnesota Energy Agency, St. Paul, Minnesota: "Rural America's Energy Future."

"We at the agency have a tendency to worry more about electricity than we do about any other energy base. The problem is that when people run out of oil, frequently we find that they reach for gas; people who are on gas know they're going to lose it -- the alternative fuel is oil. And then what will you use for an alternative back-up? Electricity. What happens when the oil runs out? We'll go totally to electricity. . .Well, that doesn't have to happen too often before the wonderful planning that your people are doing goes out the windows."

"It's difficult for us sometimes to see where we can apply conservation measures when people know that there's all the oil that they want and know that there's all the natural gas they want and know there's all the electricity they can use right on the button. If I had the right and power, I would probably invent a portable energy shortage; I'd pick out certain sectors of the country and I'd slap it on for two weeks. It would entail, of course, shutting that part of the country off so that nobody inside would know that the outside wasn't suffering just as they were. After I got done, I'd have a lot of good Christians as far as energy was concerned, and then maybe we'd make some progress. We're afraid that we're going to have a crunch before we get to the point of understanding and work as far as the layman is concerned."

"We'll need to adjust to some changes. Not necessarily bad changes but. . . .it will be a very different standard of living and a very different standard of quality of life. Most of all, we need to change our thoughts and attitudes toward these standards. For so long we have thought that 'big' is good and 'bigger' is better and 'biggest' is best. It's obvious it's what we've lived by, and it wasn't necessarily bad until we discovered the error of our ways. Now, we're going to have to think that a little is good, too. Maybe at some point in our society, we're going to have to say that 'least is best of all'."

Mini-Conference participants reflect serious thought.

Rural Health

Exerpts from the presentation by
STANLEY KLEINER, Associate Director, Rural Health Project, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

"Even if physicians are very serious about a rural setting, they're often afraid of being overwhelmed by work and isolated from their peers. So the problem is to recognize that rural communities have expectations about health care that are quite reasonable and to match those expectations with the expectations of professionals who are seeking places to locate professionally."

"Starting a practice is so much more complicated for one, two or a few individuals these days than it was before. It involves more equipment, greater costs and more staffing. It involves a willingness on the part of the community to take an active part in sharing the risk in that practice and thinking of it, not as a medical practice of a physician, but of an organization that provides care to people. That organization is tied in with the community, and that's another part of the Rural Practice Project. Our grants are to provide to non-profit organizations who will, in turn, develop relationships with physicians who work with people in the community to establish those practices."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
JERRY ROYER, M.D., Associate Dean, School of Medicine, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

"In the February 19 (1976) *New England Journal of Medicine*, Sidney Garfield and co-authors presented in their finding of four or five years of study in the Kaiser-Permanente Groups that they were able to document that the team approach (to health care) was more effective and efficient, and that it was least costly and there was greater patient satisfaction. The professionals also, by the way, were more satisfied."

"We in health too often practice all week on patients, never sitting down to discuss the 'game play' among ourselves. I'd make a strong pitch, out of experience, that the team experience would be much more effective and satisfying if regular time were set aside and built into a practice week--where you get away from patient care, office care, and work at some of this side of the curriculum of health team development."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
BEN N. SALTZMAN, M.D., Chairman, Department of Family Practice, University of Arkansas, School of Medicine, Little Rock, Arkansas.

"Over the years it has been well documented that community health councils can develop their own practical health care systems. . . The area-wide concept is really a practical one; an area can support a group of physicians practicing together. They don't even have to be located within the city limits of a community. As long as there is a nearby hospital of sufficient size to support a medical practice, physicians can join together to practice a modern type of health care."

"It is apparent today that many communities are without physicians and that many communities are losing the physicians they already have. The situation will become critical unless communities plan to organize for health services. Roads and transportation today make feasible the area-wide type of health planning. Any services that are a half hour away are quite close enough. The day of the doctors with the black bag are gone forever. Occasionally a rugged individual will want to practice in this manner, but that individual is really quite rare."

"Today any successful enterprise requires organization. It is time for communities to recognize that organization involves more than the community itself. It involves, in many instances, more than the county itself; it may be necessary to consider health services on a regional basis. Looking at it from the dollars-and-cents standpoint, it is more economical to have a centralized hospital system, medical clinic and transportation system than to have multiple systems scattered over several small communities--non of which are able to afford a productive, economical, efficient health care system. Rural communities must work together to evaluate and develop good health care programs."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
SCOTT SIMONDS, Dr. P.H., Professor of Health Education, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"Those among you who have given thought to the broad problems in health care that we face as a nation and who have taken into account the vast resources we have will agree, I think, that the only strategy we can consider is one that emphasizes three things: 1) an acceleration toward equity in our social system that will include improvements in housing, nutrition, recreation, education and an access to the health care system itself, 2) a deep and careful examination of public policy with respect to its impact on the health of people; for example, supporting the tobacco industry on one hand with great sources of money and then trying to reduce smoking by picayune educational programs, and 3) an expanded effort to enhance the individual's own responsibility for his health and health care."

"The message on health from Crookston to the U.S. is that we must develop a national health strategy which will focus on ways to restore health as a priority for each individual. Personal responsibilities for health, and principles of self-care must be accepted by professionals and the general population -- something that may be harder for the former than the latter."

Taxation

Exerpts from the presentation by
WILLIAM KELLY, State Representative, East Grand Forks, Minnesota, Chairman, House Tax Committee, State of Minnesota, and Chairman, Tax Study Committee, State of Minnesota

"In Minnesota I think it's only fair to talk about taxes in terms of a state and local system -- by that I mean the state government, local governments, county, school, city, townships and special districts -- because our revenue system, our ability to raise money at all of these levels, is interwoven and tied together. That's done purposefully because the state has certain abilities to generate certain kinds of monies."

"We take about 65% of that income tax or sales tax money or any kind of state revenue and give it back through local government aids to schools. . .and then to cities, counties, townships, etc. That is what I mean when I say there is really a state-local government finance system in Minnesota. One cannot easily separate what local governments do--and the money they raise--from what the state does. That is my first point.

"On the second point, let me make an addendum here. Many local government officials talk about what federal revenue sharing means to them. If you remember, this spring there was quite a scare that federal revenue sharing might not be extended; around the country, local government officials were saying, 'How are we going to survive without that?' In Minnesota we give much more general revenue back from state government than the 'feds' have ever thought of."

"We believe in income tax because it fits the ability to pay-- not perfectly; we are all aware of tax problems and loopholes, but it's better able to do it than any other kind of tax we've devised. That's why we rely so heavily on it, particularly since 1967 and again in 1971 when we made some significant tax changes. In those changes we not only raised income taxes, but we either stabilized or lowered real estate taxes across Minnesota. Along with that, in 1971, we developed a system of levy limits--a ceiling that exists on local governments over 2,500 population to restrict their ability to raise money from local real estate taxes."

"Obviously, with levy limits, we have some concern about that real estate tax. It's a regressive form (of taxation). If someone has a catastrophic situation occur and loses income, the tax remains the same. When people become 66 years old and lose their income, the real estate tax remains the same. So for those kinds of harms that can be done to people, the legislature and governor of Minnesota have decided to keep real estate tax in moderation."

"Obviously if the state is going to hold real estate taxes in moderation, then that's going to affect some of the things that happen across Minnesota. . . .Part of the problem with land and real estate taxes has been this recent inflation. We know what that's done to property values. . . .It has had a particular effect on agricultural land because that growth in evaluation may have exceeded what many people think is the productivity that can come from that land. Typically, we find that agricultural land is not valued for tax purposes at what it's selling for--even though the law says it should be."

"This question of how we should determine the actual value of a piece of property is an extremely important one, particularly as it relates to agricultural land. Dr. Phillip Raup of the University of Minnesota has identified that where land value has escalated too quickly, 90% of the land exchanges in rural Minnesota are between farmers -- one farmer in an area buying land from another farmer. So if that land inflation is occurring, it is created primarily by farmers buying from each other, or, more typically, selling to one of the larger farmers in the area who has the capital base to expand and has the operating capital to hold this chunk of real estate in his total operation."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
ARTHUR ROEMER, Minnesota Commissioner of Taxation, St. Paul, Minnesota.

"Some of you may not know the difference between the concept of an inheritance and an estate tax. The federal (government) has what is called an estate tax that is measured by the entire value of the taxable estate; then, $60,000 is exempted and the balance is subject to tax, and the tax rates are not dependent upon who may receive the property. The federal tax rates rise very steeply. They start at 3% on the first $5,000 above the $60,000 exemption; then they go to 7% on the next $5,000; 11% on the next $10,000; 14% on the next $10,000; 18% on the next $10,000; 22% on the next $10,000 (we are now at $50,000). Then it gets to 25% on the difference between $50,000 and $60,000; 28% on the amount above $60,000. It continues to go up where the top rate is 77% on amounts over $10 million.

"The state inheritance tax is a little different concept. It is based on the right to receive and it is computed separately against each beneficiary, and there is a separate set of exemptions and tax rates for each category of beneficiaries. By categories of beneficiaries, I am referring to the spouse as one category, minor children a second category, adult children a third, brothers and sisters another, and all others in the fifth category. . . .There is a different schedule or tax rate for each type of beneficiary in Minnesota."

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Exerpts from the presentation by
WILLIS EKEN, Minnesota State Representative, Twin Valley, Minnesota. Author of the Minnesota Farm Security Act.

"Bill Kelly identified a figure of 90% of the land transactions in the state of Minnesota as being between farmers. He was referring to the study that was conducted by Dr. Raup of the University of Minnesota. Getting a bit more precise in that study and what it indicated when looking at the Red River Valley, he indicated that in the last three years respectively, that 87%, 90% and 94% (which comes out to about 90% over those three years) of the land transactions were between what he identified as operating farmers. . . .Then, we are looking at 5% per year of what we identify as a beginning or an operating unit farm transaction. I think those kinds of statistics indicate something in terms of the trends of land ownership in the northwestern part of Minnesota that makes some of us kind of scared. It certainly indicates that there is a narrowing base in terms of who can participate in the future ownership of land in northwestern Minnesota.

"Now, based on that kind of identification of transactions that are taking place today in terms of trends and ownership, we tried to come up with some legislation that would, at least in a limited way, broaden the opportunity for participation in land ownership. . . .(We attempted) to deal with this problem primarily in two ways: 1) by setting up what we identify as a guaranteed fund on the part of the State of Minnesota; this fund will then become involved in what we identify as the participation loan process, 2) by identifying that unless there was help for someone who was going to raise the capital that is needed today to become engaged in agriculture, there is nearly no way you can project how the cash flow on a balance sheet is going to indicate that he can make those payments and repay that loan."

"The thing to remember about the program (the Farm Security Act) is that first of all, we can't view it as a total financing program. It is designed to attempt to be a start-up approach to farm finance. We find that when you start looking at current needs in agriculture today, we have gone beyond the point of being able to attain the age-old goal we've all had as farmers--that is, to pay for our farm. That is kind of a scarey situation when you start looking at the realities of the time."

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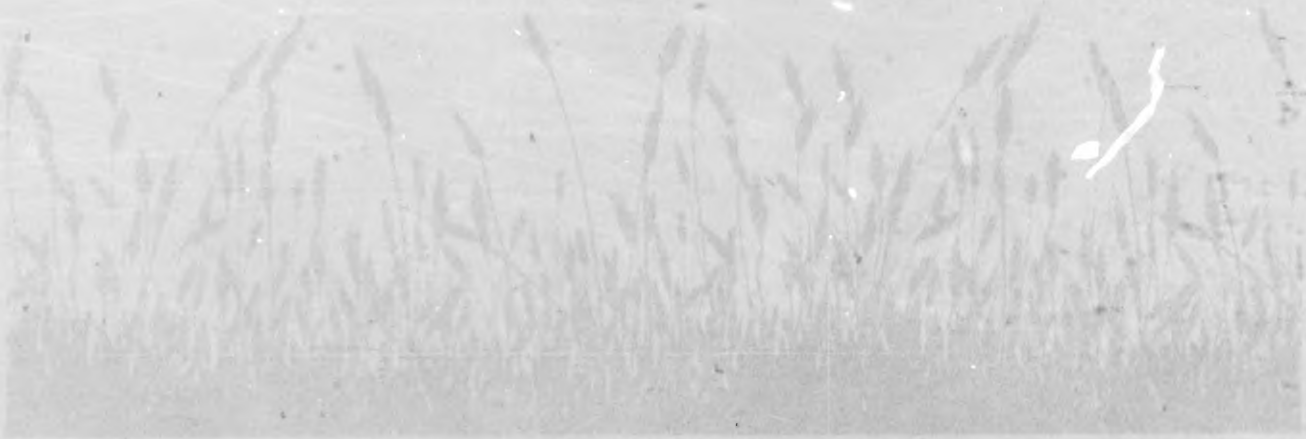

Myths of Rural America

Presentation by
CLARKE CHAMBERS, Ph.D. Chairman, Department of History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota: "Myths of Rural America."*

My first definition of myth is a body of beliefs, a social perception and ideology, a philosophy which serves to inform the cultural and political ethos of an America that remained rural in its majority until the recent past. In its secondary and second definition, I mean by myth a body of stories, images, dreams, stereotypes -- most of them urban in origin -- which very often presented distorted pictures of farmers and rural life. Yet, these myths had very real, live force because what people believe in their heads to be true, they act upon.

On perception traceable to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries portrayed the American farmer essentially as a peasant who grubbed out a primitive existence that was debasing, destructive of human values and spirit. The peasants' life was marked by drudgery, ignorance, superstition. By this myth, all the finer, cultivated ways were urban. The image of the farmer as a hick and hayseed became an object of fun and derision.

A second myth portrayed an altogether opposite picture that I label romantic. Like the image of the farmer as a peasant and hayseed, it was chiefly urban in origin. I think its roots go back to classical Greece and Rome where there was kind of a romantic myth about the fundamental importance of the farmer, the economy, and the important contribution the country person made to citizenship. We found this idea expressed with our founding fathers. Rural folk lived close to nature and were presumed by that fact to be close to God. The farmer was in this perception peaceful, prudent, hard working, generous, the soul of integrity, innocence, and honesty. Neither of these images was very accurate, but both had enormous power on the imagination of the American people in perceiving rural life and the farmer.

The roots of the third myth are Jeffersonian. In part the Jeffersonian perception was romantic and idyllic, but it also included the notion that as long as farmers constituted a majority of the American citizenry, agrarianism and democracy were intimately interrelated. It was felt in this perception that the concentration of wealth, more than anything, would undermine, corrode and subvert the dream and hope of America. The strength of the nation rested socially, psychologically, culturally and politically on a wide diffusion of property, and on the family farm. All those virtues that are associated with that kind of structure--self reliance, cooperation, neighborliness, independence--were said to be an essential part of the American character.

But as the nation moved into the 20th century, the identity of America with its rural tradition was slowly eroded. Americans moved to the city. To be a successful farmer required education, ability, business acumen, managerial skills, access to credit, etc. The farmer was neither a hick nor a hero; he was and is a businessman, engineer, mechanic and agronomist.

There are principles and traditions, not myths, which I think are still viable for rural America and the nation. First, the traditional Jeffersonian dedication to the diffusion of property, the best representation of which may still be the family farm, is one indication of historical tradition that has meaning today. Second, I believe there is still strength in the dedication of rural America to the earth and land. It is that tradition of care, concern and love which now needs enforcement if we are to survive in a physical, social or cultural sense. Third, there's a historical tradition of rural America which remains alive and essential in the practice of neighborly cooperation. Fourth, there was and is a tradition in rural America which relates to education, to lifelong learning, and I do not mean formal school training. As we read the papers, we know how dependent the world is upon the productive capacity of rural America, and I think these four traditions are essential to survive on the planet earth in the next generation.

**This is an edited, condensed version of Dr. Clarke Chambers' presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN. 55101.*

"You learn the 'art of living' in the country. You know honesty and integrity are important in a small community, 'cuz if you lie somebody will catch you right away. It's where you've got all strangers that you'll get away with it."
Pastor Jim Hanson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Crookston.

Presentation by
CATHERINE LUPORI, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota: "Rural Women: Town and Country"*

Who is the woman who lives on a farm or in a town in rural America? Is she like or is she different from the women who live in the center-city or suburbs? Are her choices free? Is it possible for her to develop her talents fully? I don't think there is very much sound reporting on the realities of being a contemporary rural woman.

Of the few studies I found, one explored the role of farm women in decision-making. I ferreted out one significant factor: the wives who took an active part in information gathering, called the extension agent, wrote for information and discussed it with friends, had a dramatically higher share in decision-making than wives who were not active in this way. It was also true according to this study that decision sharing was greater if the family farm was less specialized. Also, the more very young children she had, the less apt the wife was to share in decision-making.

If it can be taken as true evidence, a farm forum panel gave a bright, cheerful picture of the farm family: marriages are stronger in rural areas; the farm is the best place to raise children; farm wives are already liberated and all of their husbands are happy about it; they share decisions, work together. There are many reasons to doubt that things are all that rosy. Incidentally, I have been very curious to know why in the power line debate in Stearns County there seem to be no visible women at all--although one of the threats it is alleged to have is against fertility. It remains true that the activity of most women, rural and urban, is on the local rather than on the national scene. That will surely change if the percentage of women in the population continues to rise and we get closer to the reality of equality for all.

Do rural women experience the barriers of the lack of choices urban women have? How aware of themselves as persons who are changing are they? Are they ready to grant options to women who opt for different lifestyles than their own? The barrier most disturbing to me for the achievement of equality for women is the barrier women place against themselves by accepting society's judgment that they are less than equal to men.

**This is an edited, condensed version of Catherine Lupori's presentation. Audio recordings of original Conference on Rural America presentations are available through the Minnesota Humanities Commission, Metro Square 282, St. Paul, MN. 55101.*

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Business and Professional Women
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Crookston National Bank
Crookston Public Schools
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